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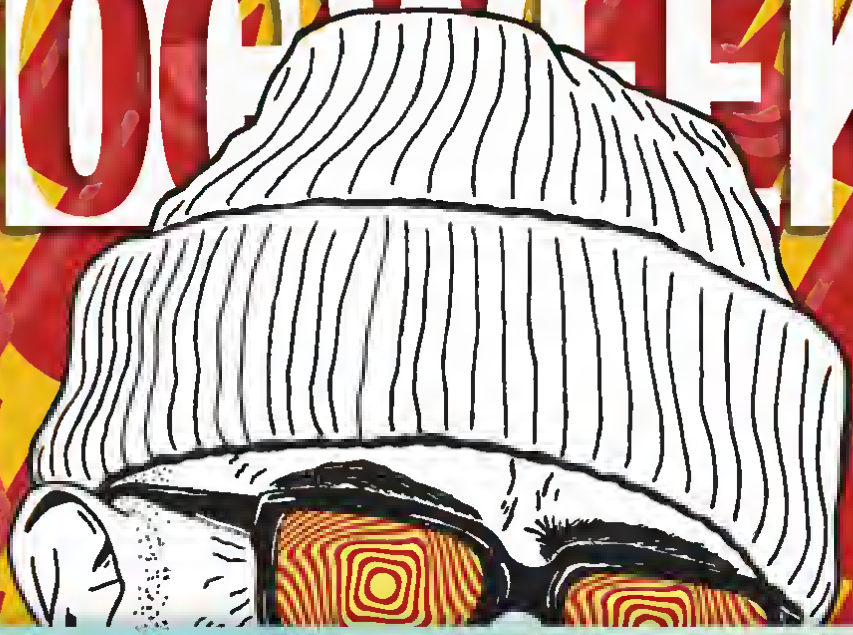

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A WHOLE CITY - of - CRAZY

Why did more than 75,000 people vote to hand over the county clerk-recorder job to a convicted ketchup-bottle thief?

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JOHN GILHOOLEY

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Illustration and design by Richie Beckman

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Handshaker

BOB AUL

Handshakes mean established trust, from longstanding relationships or following even a few words of introduction. Which is why I just kind of stared when you walked up out of the blue and wordlessly put your hand out, interrupting a conversation I was having with my fellow musician while on break from a gig we were playing. What went through my mind as I stared: Do I know you? What do you want? Are you about to hit me up for money? What if you're a maniac with a handful of bio-terror, spreading death along Fullerton's sidewalks handshake by handshake? Bud, I was staring because, in 55 years, nobody has ever done what you did, and I was just plain puzzled. When you finally spoke, you asked me to shake your hand, and after a moment of hesitation, I finally did in a bewildered sort of way. This all seemed to hurt your feelings, that you had to ask for a handshake, and you went off into the darkness half-moaning, "I just ... wanted ... to shake ... somebody's ... hand." When I turned back to my friend, he had the same baffled grin on his face that I did.

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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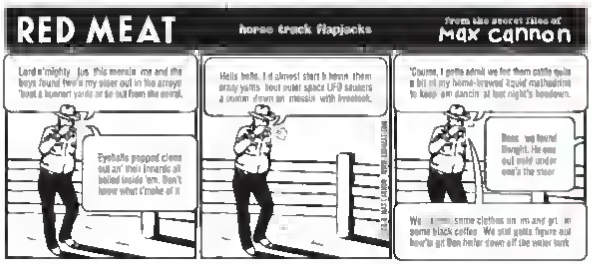
RED MEAT
horse truck flapjacks
from the secret files of Max Cannon
Lord almighty. Jus. this mornin' me and the boys found here's my sister out in the arroyo 'bout a hundred yards or so out from the corral.
Eyeballs popped clean out an' their innards all boiled inside 'em. Don't know what Cookie of it
Hello hello. I'd almost start to know them grisly yarns 'bout outer space UFO saucers a comin' down on mission with livestock.
'Course, I gotta admit we find them cattle quite a bit of my home-brewed 'dyed' methadrine to keep on ranch at last night's hoedown.
Boss, you found Dwight. He was out mid under one's the shoe
We some clothes on us and get an some black coffee. We still gotta figure out how's we get Bon hefer down off the water tank

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Cop In the Pocket

Did a SoCal cop, a mystery Texas lady, LA mobsters and a drug cartel form an alliance?

JEFF DREW

moxley CONFIDENTIAL

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

Orange County resident John Saro Balian worked as a cop with the Glendale Police Department and maintained an eyebrow-raising relationship with a Texas woman identified as "SS" in federal law-enforcement files. On multiple occasions, Balian flew to Brownsville and crossed the international border into Mexico with "SS." One of Balian's numerous "burner" phones was registered in the name of "SS." According to an FBI organized-crime task force, from December 2015 to January 2018, Balian and "SS" called each other 1,534 times.

During her association with Balian, "SS" also maintained a romantic relationship with a high-ranking member of the Gulf Cartel, a Mexican organized-crime syndicate based in Matamoros, located across the Rio Grande river from Brownsville. The cartel's history includes bribing American politicians, prosecutors and cops, as well as committing ruthless violence to smuggle cocaine, humans, marijuana, heroin and methamphetamine into the United States. A declassified 2017 "National Drug Threat Assessment" by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimated the gang shipped 900 pounds of cocaine monthly into the U.S. Its members are also known for kidnapping, extortion, money laundering and grotesque executions.

In mid-May, after a multi-year probe, the FBI's Eurasian Organized Crime Task Force raided Balian's Seal Beach residence and arrested him for repeatedly making false statements to federal agents investigating his secret ties to the Gulf Cartel, Mexican Mafia and Armenian criminal gangs operating in Southern California. A criminal complaint states that agents have considered potential extortion and Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) charges.

"I believe Balian has obstructed justice, provided false and misleading statements to federal agents, and accepted a bribe," Michael Hyland, a special agent on the FBI task force, wrote in a May 14 court filing. Hyland believes the cop was in a "criminal collaboration" with a series of underworld figures.

Balian, 46, is now in protective custody inside the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles. A judge considers him a flight risk. On June 1, Assistant United States Attorney Jeff Mitchell accepted a stipulation proposed by Balian's attorney that he withhold issuing a federal indictment until June 28. That move allows the defendant to contemplate making a guilty plea deal to shorten whatever punishment he may face.

After Balian's arrest, U.S. Attorney Nicola T. Hanna called investigations involving public corruption "difficult and troubling."

The keys to the government's case are three informants—two Armenian hoodlums and a Mexican Mafia gangster—as well as captured text messages between the suspects and intercepted calls. Investigators collected numerous stories about Balian's alleged activities. For example, in October 2015, the DEA searched the trash of an Armenian mobster the agency eventually labeled CI2 (confidential informant No. 2) in the case and found handwritten notes. It stated, in part, "1. Talk to Saro, make the deal P/O Gordo, Mexca 10/week at 23.5."

Multiple street criminals told Hyland they knew Balian only as "Saro," his middle name. In his complaint, the agent asserted the note outlined a "criminal objective." He believes it listed a price for distributing 23.5 kilograms of cocaine from Mexico with the assistance of the cop. CI2 admitted he'd known Balian since middle school, called him "a business partner," gave him money for off-the-book jobs over the years, and considered him "a greedy person who would do anything, including picking up and delivering drugs," according to court records.

Hyland claims "Gordo," mentioned in the note, is Arutyun Khrayan, a Soviet immigrant and killer who was convicted in 2008 for the attempted kidnapping for ransom of a wealthy business owner in Glendale. CI2 told agents that people associated with Khrayan wanted the government's key witness in the case, James Anthony Petlan, found and were willing to pay $120,000.

"Balian orchestrated the whole fucking thing," CI2 told agents. Hyland memorialized in his report that "Balian wanted [Mexican Mafia associates] to persuade Petlan to change his testimony." But Petlan wasn't located.

In another incident, CI2 said, he ordered the cop to find the men he believed had burglarized his office of valuable property in February 2017. Balian then asked a deputy on the Fugitive Task Force at the U.S. Marshals Service if he could locate one of the targets. When the deputy told him to fill out the necessary official paperwork, the cop dropped the request, according to Hyland's complaint.

A Feb. 6, 2017, text message shows CI2 telling the cop, "I'm home have $$ call when you can." Balian replied, "Ok." In another message, CI2 told him to "focus" on finding the burglars. Balian answered, "I told you I'm working on things but I'm not a magician."

CI3 (confidential informant No. 3), a Mexican Mafia associate in the St. Andrews (STA) Gang, told investigators Balian carried out secret missions for Jose Loza, a.k.a. "Cartune" or "Pumpkin Head." When Loza, a full-fledged member of the Mexican Mafia with the Santa Fe Springs-based gang Canta Ranas, was arrested in 2016 on RICO charges, CI3 says, "the cop came looking for me," to carry out orders. "He comes to me with a list," said the informant. "[It'd be] 'Go pick up this money. Do this or that. … Cartune says do this or that.'"

CI3 claims Balian switched burner phones monthly "due to security concerns," tipped the gangster before planned police-fugitive hunt operations, ordered robberies of marijuana shops and stash houses cops scheduled to raid, gave lists of individuals to be extorted and/or roughed up, and worked on a plot with the Southsiders gang in the Mexican Mafia to squeeze $50,000 per week from Los Angeles area pot dispensaries. But, upon reflection, they considered the amount too implausible and reduced it to $2,000, according to CI3.

CI1 (confidential informant No. 1), an Armenian convict, told agents that Balian provided him the locations of vehicles to be stolen so they could be loaded into shipping containers and sold outside the U.S.

The mess gets messier. According to Hyland's complaint, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) detectives determined that Department of Homeland Security special agent Felix Cisneros and Balian had once worked as bodyguards for "GT," a businessman who'd been under investigation. LAPD files record the two cops as "close personal friends." A federal jury convicted Cisneros in April for conspiracy, making false statements and falsifying records; he faces a maximum punishment of 20 years in prison at his July 30 sentencing.

In one of his stressful interviews with the FBI task force, Balian denied any wrongdoing. But he conceded that CI2 liked bragging to other gangsters that he controled a police officer.

"[He'd say he had] this special fucking cop," explained Balian. "'Pig this. Pig that.' And these guys get all fucking excited, you know, which there is nothing like that. Absolutely nothing. I'm not fucking on anybody's payroll."

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Why the Big A Must Remain Shovel-Ready

And real divorcing housewives, dueling opioid lawsuits, un-turned out and Koch-pain decision

a clockwork ORANGE

»MATT COKER

There may be an alternative use for a giant shovel that showed up in front of the Big A in Anaheim.

Representatives of the city, the Angels, Southern California Gas Co., and Anaheim Fire & Rescue used the 30-foot shovel on April 20 to promote National Safe Digging Month. Close to 3,000 cases of people damaging underground infrastructure without having first dialed 8-1-1 were logged last year by SoCalGas, which claims 99 percent of those would have been avoided had diggers called first to determine the likelihood of hitting a utility line.

Now that 8-1-1 awareness has been properly raised, the monster shovel should be kept around. The April day the shovel was displayed at Angel Stadium ended with the team one-half game behind the American League West-leading Houston Astros.

That was when the Angels were still riding a red-hot start energized by the arm and bat of rookie two-way phenom Shohei Ohtani, who was putting up numbers as a pitcher and a hitter that had not been seen in the majors since Babe Ruth.

But on June 8, Ohtani was placed on the disabled list with a Grade 2 sprain of the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow, which the Angels acknowledged would require the player taking off most of the rest of the season to recover. Then, two nights later, ESPN's Pedro Gomez reported that Ohtani's injury is far more serious and will likely necessitate Tommy John surgery that would keep him off the mound until the 2020 season.

The Angels countered the ESPN report on June 11, saying it is still too early to tell if the reconstructive surgery will be needed, holding out hope that platelet-rich plasma and stem-cell injections Ohtani is receiving will spare him the knife. But by that moment, the Angels found themselves in third place, sandwiched between the Mariners and Astros (who were tied for first at the time) and the fourth-place A's, who were only three games behind the Halos.

So, yes, keep that mammoth shovel around because your Anaheim Angels of Anaheim may very well need it to dig out of a quickly forming hole.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"You know why divorce is expensive? Because it's worth it."

—Kelly Dodd, with the familiar ring of words written by a reality-show producer, in the trailer for season 13 of The Real Housewives of Orange County, *which premieres July 16 on Bravo.*

JAGGED LITTLE PILLS

When I read in May that a bunch of Central and Northern California counties had banded together in a federal lawsuit against multiple pharmaceutical companies because of their roles in the opioid crisis, I wondered why Orange County didn't pile on. After all, we're ground zero for fatal opioid overdoses, especially among young adults in South County.

But then I recalled that the Orange County district attorney's office and the Santa Clara County Counsel had already filed a consumer-protection lawsuit in 2014 against Purdue Pharma, Endo Health Solutions, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Actavis and three companies known collectively as Teva.

In the trial that is scheduled to open June 18 in Orange County Superior Court, the companies are accused of false and misleading marketing of opioids by essentially misleading doctors and consumers about the dangers and ineffectiveness of opioids as long-term treatments for physical pain. On the trial's eve, Oakland and Los Angeles County joined Orange and Santa Clara counties in the litigation.

"The prosecution of this case just grew substantially stronger with the County of Los Angeles and the city of Oakland joining us in this fight," states DA Tony Rackauckas in a news release issued June 8. "We must hold these pharmaceutical companies responsible for their deceptive marketing tactics because people are dying and their families are suffering. Putting profits before patients is not only dangerous, but [also] irresponsible."

Meanwhile, because the federal suit brought by California counties is similar to others that have been filed across the country, legal experts suspect it will be combined with ongoing nationwide opioid litigation in federal court in Ohio. So far, more than 500 public entities have lodged similar complaints.

TURNOUT BURNOUT

If you didn't like the outcomes of Orange County primary elections, don't blame those who voted, blame those who sat out.

In a county of 3.17 million people, there are 1,481,881 registered voters. On June 5, 440,247 votes were cast—either early, by mail or at the polls covering 1,561 voting precincts.

That's a pathetic 29.7 percent turnout in what was billed as an extremely important primary election. So if you don't like the choices you are left with for [INSERT ANY POLITICAL OFFICE] in the November general election, you know why.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK, FIRST RUNNER-UP

"Vernon Smith has a freaking Nobel Prize. If I told him don't take Koch money, that would violate his academic freedom. He's not asking for money from the Mafia."

—Chapman University President Daniele Struppa, in Margot Roosevelt's June 8 *Orange County Register* story, "$5 Million to Chapman University From Billionaire Charles Koch Sparks an Uproar."

Koch and his brother David, who *Forbes* ranks as the eighth-richest people in the world, are the right's version of the left's sugar daddy George Soros. The Charles Koch Foundation funds Chapman's Smith Institute for Political Economy and Philosophy, which claims to be dedicated to the exchange of ideas in economics and the humanities.

However, critics allege the real agenda behind the center, which is jointly named after 18th-century economist Adam Smith and Chapman economist and 2002 Nobel Prize winner Vernon Smith, is to hand-pick libertarian and "free-market" professors, offer classes that draw students of the humanities, and replace its fuzzy liberal programming with zero-regulation ideas.

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A Whole City of Crazy

Why did more than 75,000 people vote to hand over the county clerk-recorder job to a convicted ketchup-bottle thief?

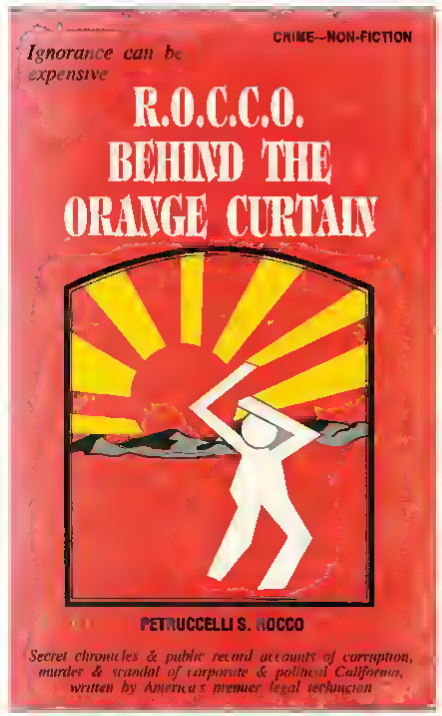
BY NICK SCHOU

On June 5, the voters of Orange County collectively voted to give another four years in office to incumbent OC Clerk-Recorder Hugh Nguyen. In 2014, after winning his first race, Nguyen became the nation's first Vietnamese-American clerk-recorder in U.S. history. A moderate Republican, he extended his department's operating hours to include one Saturday per month—thus making it easier for working people to access the agency's services—and also supervised the department's successful digitization of records, thus vastly speeding up the agency's recording process.

Clearly, Nguyen, who took in 79.3 percent of the votes, was the best man for the job, and he won in a landslide. But sadly, that's not the big headline coming out of the 2018 Orange County Clerk-Recorder's race. Instead, it's this: For some reason, 20.7 percent of voters chose a rival candidate, Steve Rocco, a man whose chief mission in life is spewing conspiracy theories involving global domination, a grocery-store chain, a brand of breakfast sausages, and the Kodak Film Co.

As of press time, no less than 75,208 people voted for Rocco, a former Orange Unified School District (OUSD) trustee who in 2004, after listing himself as an "educator" but otherwise running no campaign whatsoever, used every board meeting to expound on his theories about something called the "Partnership." (Rocco's interest in the Partnership apparently stems from his arrest in the early 1980s for allegedly attempting to shoplift several Smokecraft sausages and a few rolls of Kodak Film from a Santa Ana Albertsons.) Despite this, more people voted for Rocco than live in each of the cities of Yorba Linda (67,826), Laguna Niguel (65,448), San Clemente (65,326), La Habra (62,066) and Fountain Valley (57,010).

I first met Rocco in 1996, when then-music editor Jim Washburn thought it might be amusing for me to talk to him, given that I was at the time digging into local angles involving the CIA, Reagan-era cocaine smuggling and international arms deals. Rocco showed up wearing his trademark black beanie and handed me a fading copy of his self-published "expose" on the Partnership, *R.O.C.C.O. Beyond the Orange Curtain*, which bills itself thusly: "Secret chronicles & public record accounts of corruption, murder & scandal of corporate & political California, written by America's premier legal technician." For an hour or so, he ranted and rambled about how his prior shoplifting record was the product of a conspiracy by Albertsons et al., as well as how the tragic death by drug overdose of the son of one of the grocery-store chain's executives was actually foul play involving drug trafficking by the company.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Washburn had gotten to know Rocco at various local swap meets, where Rocco would display crates full of vinyl albums, many of which were stamped as property of the Santa Ana Public Library. Of course, whenever anyone attempted to purchase the records, Rocco would shout at the would-be customer, warning him or her that they weren't for sale. I forgot all about Rocco until 2004, when he beat Phil Martinez, a park ranger and teachers' union-backed candidate, for a seat on OUSD's board of trustees. Immediately, the national news media seized on the fact that nobody had a clue who Steve Rocco was. Because there was a famous skateboarder with the same name, many media outlets erroneously assumed he might be the "mystery candidate," as the news stations dubbed Rocco at the time.

So when I showed up at Rocco's house to attempt to interview him, several TV producers swooped out of nowhere and, assuming I was Rocco, began trying to interview me. *OC Weekly* ended up with an exclusive scoop on Rocco, his background and bizarre beliefs. Any doubts as to whether Rocco was a figment of my deranged imagination were firmly dispelled when Rocco finally showed up at an OUSD board meeting in his beanie and dark glasses and carrying serial-killer-style cut-and-paste fliers explaining his Partnership conspiracy theory. He even held an impromptu press conference with an eccentric cohort who claimed Albertsons had hired him to assassinate Rocco. (This caused the *Weekly* to speculate whether Rocco was actually the living incarnation of deceased comedian Andy Kaufman.)

In the chaotic wake of numerous OUSD meetings during which Rocco refused to vote on any matters and used his time to harangue fellow board members, a group of concerned parents rallied to recall Rocco. But this effort sadly failed to garner enough public support. So the school board voted to censure Rocco, causing him to sue the school district, thus wasting hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars. After he failed to win a Santa Ana City Council seat, Rocco went dark for a while.

Then, on Sept. 29, 2008, campus security at Chapman University arrested Rocco for stealing a half-empty bottle of ketchup from a cafeteria. In his infinite wisdom, District Attorney Tony Rackauckas opted to prosecute Rocco to the fullest extent of the law. Although Rocco could have taken a plea deal, he insisted on a jury trial, during which "America's premier legal technician" attempted to represent himself. Following a brief media circus, Rocco was finally convicted of the ketchup caper in April 2009.

It's likely Rocco was at Chapman University on the day of his arrest because he was obsessed with Fred Smoller, a professor who produced a video about Rocco's school board reign titled *Recalling Rocco*. In a recent interview, Smoller said he was dismayed that so many people had voted for Rocco in his race to become Orange County's clerk-recorder, but that he wasn't particularly surprised, since candidates are still allowed to provide their own ballot statements without any official vetting. In order to challenge Rocco's self-description as an "educator," a private citizen would have to file a legal complaint against Rocco and deal with all the hassle involved.

Smoller's interest in Rocco began with the fact that he himself voted for the mystery candidate when he first ran for OUSD's board of trustees, simply because his opponent described himself as a "park ranger" whereas Rocco claimed to be a teacher. "I believe there needs to be legislation involving a penalty for people who provide misleading ballot statements," Smoller argued. "On the one hand, it's funny," Smoller added. "But on another level, it's really serious. It's a perfect case study of what happens when we don't pay attention to local elections."

Nguyen, who beat Rocco handily this year, says he was mystified as to how Rocco won so many votes. He said he considered challenging Rocco's ballot statement, but he ultimately decided against it. "I didn't want to make a big stink and give him media time," he explained. "It's kind of sad that so many people voted for him because people always complain about folks who are elected and don't do their job. I love what I do and will continue to work harder. That's why I got 250,000 votes."

Irvine City Councilwoman Kimberlee Nichols, who frequently sparred with Rocco when she served on the OUSD board of trustees, also said she was dismayed at the high voter turnout for her former nemesis. "He has a certain number of followers who vote for him even though he is crazy—just for kicks," she said. "This pathology in voting is inexplicable. It's disconcerting on many levels."

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OCWEEKLY Bulletin

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Upcoming Events

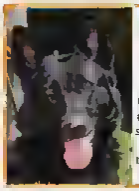
OC Night Market June 15-17

SUMMER IS COMING. Mark yo' calendars and tag yo' friends for the biggest party of the summer with food, games, art, shopping and performances at OC Fair & Event Center! Bring out the squad to our FIFTH SEASON to take pics of food for the 'gram, find the perfect gift from merch and crafts vendors or commission a special piece by a local artist at our Art Walk.
Friday & Saturday 4PM to 12AM | Sunday 4PM to 11PM

SINATRA TRIBUTE BAND LIVE

Newport Beach Summer Concert Series, presented by the Newport Beach City Arts Commission. Matt Mauser sings Sinatra and other musical greats with the Pete Jacobs Big Band! The concert begins at 6 p.m. and ends promptly at 7:30 p.m. and is FREE to the public.

Messages



GIA

Gia is a magnificent big boned 5 year old girl who is incredibly smart. This girl needs a job to do! She is very strong and active and requires someone with previous shepherd experience. Gia knows many commands and she is eager to please. She is not good with other dogs or cats, so requires a home where she can be the queen. Gia would thrive in a home that understands the complex nature of the German Shepherd. To learn more about her please visit gsroc.org

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Access Denied?

AccessCal seeks a family resource center at Anaheim's least visited park, so what's the holdup?

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Pine trees tower over a patch of grassland at Brookhurst Park in West Anaheim. The acre of park spare behind the Brookhurst Community Center is largely shaded by the conifers, but no one takes refuge from the warm sun beneath them. Across the street, brown youth haul their backpacks home from different area schools to ramshackle apartment complexes each afternoon. The neighborhood is where gang violence infamously claimed the innocent life of 9-year-old Ximena Meza in 2014. It's in this intersection between a park and its surrounding poverty that Access California Services (AccessCal), an acclaimed nonprofit, sees its future in Anaheim—if it's to have one at all.

Nahla Kayali, AccessCal's storied founder and executive director, came close to realizing a long-held vision of positioning her health-and-human-services organization within the park two years ago. In the fall of 2016, city staff drew up a lease agreement for the ambitious family resource center project slated to be built next to the existing community center, a plan that came within hours of going before the City Council until, suddenly, getting pulled from the Nov. 1 agenda, never to return. It enjoyed the support of council members Kris Murray and Jordan Brandman on the eve of an election and is seen by some as an unfortunate sacrifice upon the altar of Anaheim's polarizing politics.

But Kayali isn't giving up the fight. She keeps a folding table with a crate box carrying a dozen case folders in her Anaheim office to remind her of AccessCal's humble beginnings in 1998. The organization has soared to impressive heights in the past 20 years, a framed picture shows Kayali with President Barack Obama during a White House "César E. Chavez Champions of Change" celebration in 2014, at which she was among 10 such honorees. For more than a decade, Kayali's seen park space as ideal to further carry out AccessCal's mission of "serving the underserved community."

"We need to be in a park because we're a community center," she says. "We can do activities with the youth, offer after-school programs, and do health fairs."

Without such a location, AccessCal has been able to offer an array of services from mental-health therapy sessions to citizenship classes. They're the go-to organization under county contract for refugee-assistance programs. But AccessCal has outgrown its current digs, tucked away in a business corridor along Brookhurst Street that's far from ideal, both in terms of rent and accessibility.

Among the benefits the nonprofit touts in its proposal is that it would become the hub for about 60 health and human services. A computer lab open to the public, fenced-in playground, gym and modern classrooms are just a few of the amenities envisioned. The Brookhurst Park parcel has long been in the city's sights for service-orientated development, too. In 2002, city staff drew up blueprints for a therapeutic center to be built there and run by AbilityFirst, a nonprofit for people with disabilities. AbilityFirst made its home at a building next to Maxwell Park at the time. AccessCal planned to move into AbilityFirst's old space after the switch, but everything fell apart because the city was unable to secure funding.

"We were waiting for many years for AbilityFirst to move out," Kayali says. "When they didn't, that's when we approached the city about utilizing that land for a family resource center." The lease agreement that came in 2016 held rent at $1 per year for 35 years, with AccessCal raising an initial $2 million for the center's estimated $7 million construction costs. Not all were onboard with the proposal or its terms then, and it remains tied up now.

In her office on the seventh floor of Anaheim City Hall, Denise Barnes sifts through all sides. Days after the AccessCal plan fell through, she won a seat on the City Council, representing District 1, a political sliver of West Anaheim that includes Brookhurst Park. "I can't take park space away when I've worked so hard for over a year to get more park space," says Barnes, an admirer of Kayali. "Quite frankly, now we're even questioning should the parks be used for anything but children playing, sports and having a family get-together."

The councilwoman had scheduled AccessCal's proposal to come before the council in May, but she changed course. "I felt so bad pulling it," Barnes admits. "Is it the right timing? Probably not."

Both Barnes and Kayali point to a comprehensive Anaheim Parks Plan passed by the Anaheim City Council on May 15 in bolstering their perspectives. Kayali flips through the 57-page plan, drawing attention to a graph showing just three "Andy Anaheim" characters listed at the bottom for Brookhurst Park. The illustration with the city's mascot reveals it's the least-visited park in the city, according to a survey for the plan. "They recommended that family resource centers be in the parks and in West Anaheim," Kayali adds. "Recreation centers are part of the parkland and are not separate. We promised that for every tree we take out, that we will be planting two trees in the park." Barnes sees a need to preserve the plot in order to maintain an outlined standard of at least 2 acres of parks per 1,000 residents, one West Anaheim falls short on.

GABRIEL SAN ROMAN

AccessCal's family resource center faces other obstacles. The West Anaheim Neighborhood Development (WAND) council, known for reactionary politics, voiced its opposition during a public forum. "They think that we only serve one population, the Arab and Muslim population," says Kayali, an Arab-American Muslim. "Human services does not have an ethnicity."

Esther Wallace, WAND's chairwoman, echoes similar points to those espoused by Barnes, who also sits on WAND's executive committee. "We do not have enough park space in West Anaheim," she says. "[AccessCal] offers good programs, but they do not need park space to do them."

In pursuing her cause, Kayali made an impassioned 10-minute presentation on the plan before the March 28 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission. "A proposal like this is not too much different from the other partnerships that have been embraced on city park land," said Brent Dennis, Anaheim's community services director at the time. Kayali faced tough questions, though, chiefly from commissioner Craig Farrow, who's also an advisory committee member for Support Our Anaheim Resort (SOAR). After substantial discussion, the commission voted 4-2-1 to not support the AccessCal project.

After years of making her case, Kayali wants a City Council vote and a clear understanding of which direction to take AccessCal moving forward. "We have to move out next year by September," she says of the nonprofit's current office space. "We'll probably have to move out of Anaheim because the rent is really high. We've been serving this community for 20 years. It'd be heartbreaking to leave the city, especially West Anaheim."

When the city couldn't secure funding for AbilityFirst to move to Brookhurst Park a decade ago, that organization eventually left for Long Beach. The nonprofit's current leadership insists the move was unrelated to the fate of the proposed therapeutic center. But AccessCal is hedging its future in Anaheim on the family resource center plan being approved. As Murray's request, the council is expected to hear a presentation on the project on June 19, but it won't be taking a vote on it.

"Every time we talk to council members, they really believe in the organization and what we offer," Kayali says. "There's something behind this that we don't know."

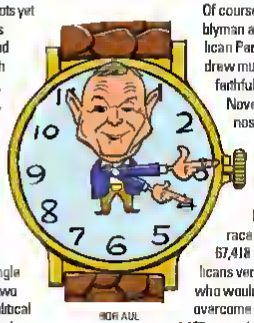
GSANROMAN@OCWEEKLY.COM

Numbers Racket

» MATT COKER

As my meaty fingers bang the keyboard, Hans Keirstead leads fellow Democrat Harley Rouda by 87 votes to square off against 48th Congressional District incumbent Dana Rohrabacher (R-Putin's power tool) in the November general election, according to the Orange County Registrar of Voters.

But with several mail-in ballots yet to be counted at press time, it is conceivable the race for second will keep flipping back and forth between Keirstead and Rouda. As we await the final outcome, let's drill down on the votes that have been tabulated.



BOB AUL

As of 10 a.m. June 11, the official count had Rohrabacher with 38,629 votes, followed by Keirstead (21,893), Rouda (21,806) and Republican Scott Baugh (20,332). Under California's jungle primary system, only the top two vote-getters, regardless of political party, advance to the general election.

Just looking at the numbers individually, it would appear Rohrabacher, with 30.5 percent of all votes counted as of Monday morning, is on his way to cruising to re-election as he had far distanced himself from Keirstead (at 17.2 percent), Rouda (17.1 percent) and Baugh (16 percent).

However, the case can also be made that the majority of those who punched their tickets for the Democrats or Baugh were rejecting Rohrabacher and/or President Donald Trump, with whom the congressman has closely aligned himself.

If you add up the June 11 Keirstead and Rouda tally, you get 43,699 votes, so if they were one person, they would have finished far ahead of Rohrabacher. Baugh likely received votes from people who would never vote for Rohrabacher, so some of them may go with the Democratic challenger in the fall.

Of course, as a former state assemblyman and Orange County Republican Party chairman, Baugh likely drew much of his support from GOP faithful who will either sit out the November election or hold their noses and vote Rohrabacher.

Then there is the exercise of factoring in all 16 candidates whose names appeared on the June 5 ballot. When you look at the race that way, you discover that 67,418 votes were cast for Republicans versus 58,190 for Democrats, who would not even be helped to overcome the GOP if you give them the 1,137 votes that went to a Libertarian and a candidate who indicated no party preference.

The hope for the November Democrat, whoever it ends up being, is that by then, major dissatisfaction with Trump has escalated, a get-out-the-vote strategy works splendidly, and Rohrabacher's fecklessness and nuttiness actually sticks with the 48th electorate (for a change).

Got Dana Watch fodder? Email mcoker@ocweekly.com

Political Fútbol

» STEVE LOWERY

Russia vs. Saudi Arabia

Russia update: This is the opening match of the 2018 World Cup, hosted by Russia. Being the host is the only way Russia could get into the World Cup because, though they're good at lots of team sports—hockey for one, synchronized election tampering for another—they really suck at soccer. Still, they are formidable opponents given their go-for-the-kill attitude — and we do mean *kill* given the Russian government has reportedly killed all manner of opponents with a Rasputin-like cornucopia of methods ranging from poisoning to radioactive poisoning to being impaled on a fence to staged suicides, i.e., hangings, jumps and being hit by trains. Not sure who will be in Russia's starting lineup, but we assume Donald Trump will, once again, be carrying the water.

Saudi Arabia update: Before the Russians were puppeteering Americans with apparent immunity, it was the Saudis who did what they wanted with no consequences. You do remember that the attacks of 9/11 were organized by a Saudi, performed predominately by Saudis, all with the reported knowledge and blessing of the Saudi government, those sins of the Saudis proving so horrible and outrageous that the United States attacked Iraq. Here's how messed-up Saudi Arabia is: The country is trumpeting its major push forward in human rights by issuing its first—FIRST—driver's license to a woman. This at a time when women outnumber men in universities and run entire countries—well, outside of the U.S. *Lock her up, eh comrade?* Of course, the Saudis' mistreatment of human beings knows no gender, the United Nations saying Saudis who "peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression are systematically persecuted." Something like that, let alone torture or withholding a license, could never happen here in the U.S., where we believe all people, man or woman, deserve equal access to all things. Unless you're gay and want cake, then fuck you.

Consensus: There's a term in soccer called "parking the bus" that refers to having all of your team stand in front and defend the goal. Since this match is being held in Russia, we're assuming the Saudi goalkeeper will be hit by a bus, his death quickly ruled a suicide by authorities. Just to be safe, Trump will then pardon the bus.

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SAT, JUNE. 23

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THU, JUNE. 28

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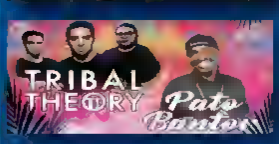
SUN, JULY. 1

Independence Doy
Fire Work Extravaganza
Music by Wild Child
ft. Dave Brock - A Jim Morrison Celebration
W/ Special Guests
WED, JULY. 4



Tribol Theory w/ Poto Bonton
FRI, JULY. 6

FUTURE EVENTS

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SUN, JULY 29

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SAT, AUG 11

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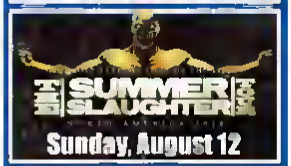

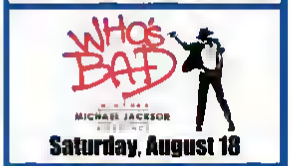

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MATTHEW MURPHY

fri/06/15

(CONCERT)

DIVE IN
Night Dive

The Aquarium of the Pacific's Night Dive is already a local institution, but this particular night dive is extra-extra-special because it's the 20th anniversary of the aquarium itself. Hosted by Long Beach drag local and cultural icon Jewels, the event's wild roster is filled with art, music and more. Watch '80s cover band Flashpants sweat to the not-so-oldies with support from Pico Rivera emo-pop-punk outfit Almost Closer, while featured artist Brian Kesinger—author and illustrator of the steam punk-y *Walking Your Octopus*, a particularly night dive-y tome—exhibits original work and performs a live drawing session, too. Think of it as a deep, illuminating experience, just as a proper night dive should be.

Night Dive at Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 590-3100; www.aquariumofpacific.org. 7:30 p.m. $14.95-$17.95. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

(BURLESQUE)

Titillating Tikis!
Exotic Tiki Burlesque

'Tis the season ... of tiki! Summer's *juuuust* about here, which means it's time to indulge in anything and everything tropical: flashy shirts, bright bikinis, cocktails, you name it. This weekend, Harvelle's nods to the hottest time of year with an Exotic Tiki Burlesque show. In addition to babes stripping down to their coconuts, there's also a Hawaiian-shirt contest for guests to enter, island music to dance to, and fruity cocktails to get turnt on. When was the last time you had a Bahama Mama? Exactly. Get there early—before it sells out.

MORE ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

Exotic Tiki Burlesque at Harvelle's Long Beach, 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, (562) 269-5230, harvelles.com. 9 & 11 p.m. $15-$75. —ERIN DEWITT

sat/06/16

(CONCERT)

ROLLING WITH THE CHANGES
Chicago and REO Speedwagon

As it has been in recent years, bands whose glory days have passed have no problem reeling back the years and cashing in on their prominent past. Now capitalizing on this trend are Chicago and REO Speedwagon, who bring their sing-along hits of the '70s and '80s to Five Point Amphitheatre. For fans of this era, these two pop-rock outfits were staples of radio, with their respective hits almost inescapable. The tunes of both classic rock bands are now primarily played on oldies radio stations. Even though they aren't necessarily oldies bands, on this tour, they celebrate their songs of yesteryear.

Chicago and REO Speedwagon at Five Point Amphitheatre, 14800 Chinon Ave., Irvine, www.fivepointamphitheatre.com. 8 p.m. $29.50-$403. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

(PARTIES)

Tree Huggers
Party In the Garden

The same year Dr. Seuss wrote his environmentalist fable *The Lorax* (1971), visionary eco-educators transformed 26 acres of dying orange grove at what was then Orange State College into what would become Cal State Fullerton's edenic urban-nature refuge, woodlands to desert to Mediterranean ecologies. Today, Friends of the Fullerton Arboretum celebrates its work of seed banking, research, community education and maintaining 4,000 trees, shrubs and flowering plants from around the world with scenic walkways, water features and historic Heritage House. Its seasonal benefit features live music from the Jamie Shew Quintet; food by standout local chefs; wine, beer and cocktails—with your donation going to help the arborists speak for the trees.

Party In the Garden at Fullerton Arboretum, 1900 Associated Rd., Fullerton, (657) 278-4010; fullertonarboretum.org. 5 p.m. $75-$90. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

sun/06/17

[THEATER]

Between Science and Superstition

The Twilight Zone

As far as strange fiction and fantasy entertainment go, no one has ever really topped producer/narrator Rod Serling's classic television series *The Twilight Zone*. Each episode of the series presented viewers with a fantastical tale that often showcased a slice of social or political commentary. Directors Darrin Kristin and David Campos have selected three of Serling's classic episodes—"The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine," "One for the Angels" and "A Most Unusual Camera"—for theatrical presentation at Fullerton's STAGEStheatre. Behold the magic that befalls a variety of colorful characters as they approach their unusual fates ... in *The Twilight Zone*!

The Twilight Zone at STAGEStheatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484; www.stagesoc.org. 5:30 p.m. Through July 8. $20-$22. – SCOTT FEINBLATT

[CONCERT]

Glory Days

New Found Glory

The aughties are calling—can you hear them? It's the sound of yet another band you remember from middle school (or high school or college—should I keep going?) coming back for another concert. Nostalgia will surely set in at this New Found Glory show, but the four-piece band still write and release music and continue to tour and engage new fans frequently. So whether or not you plan on rocking your old Dickies shorts and black-and-red shoelaces, go ahead and reminisce about old times at this show, while also appreciating how the South Florida group grew up right with you.

New Found Glory with Bayside, the Movielife and William Ryan Key at the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim. 6 p.m. $29.50. – AIMEE MURILLO

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mon/06/18

[CONCERT]

Machine Dreams

Little Dragon

Swedish electro group Little Dragon have maintained a solid foothold in their corner of pop music, presenting spacey, smooth tunes imagined through hypnotic electronic and percussion instruments and silky vocals by lead singer Yukimi Nagano. Seeing them live is a blast, not only for the opportunity to be consumed by their danceable beats, but also to see Nagano preen and dance across the stage in various avant-garde fashions. If you've yet to experience the pleasure of seeing this group perform live, make yourself available to greet the Gothenburg gang at this stellar show tonight.

Little Dragon at Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com. 9 p.m. $35. 21+. – AIMEE MURILLO

tue/06/19

[THEATER]

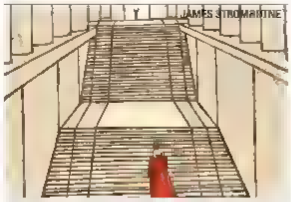
Stories Through Song

The Color Purple

Adapted for film and most recently as a musical-theater production, the compelling storyline of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* has touched thousands of audiences the world over. The current touring musical focuses on members of one Georgia African-American family's lineage of women, starting with the young Celie, who faces heart-wrenching obstacles from the early 1900s through the Depression. Soundtracked by numerous jazz, gospel, ragtime and blues songs, this vibrant adaptation adds more layers to the source material while maintaining its spirit.

The Color Purple at Segerstrom Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 7:30 p.m. Through June 24. $29-$89. – AIMEE MURILLO

wed/06/20



[ART]

WORLDS OF COLOR

'Beyond the Brushstrokes: Paintings by James Strombotne'

Nationally recognized contemporary artist James Strombotne has been championed for his swath of paintings that portray quiet, intimate or ordinary moments bathed in extreme color, glamorous women lounging in interiors, landscapes, and still-lifes. While many of his figures seem slightly unrealistic and cartoonish in their rendering, Strombotne manages to animate them with striking color choices and hard lines. Though his paintings are but a fraction of his overall oeuvre, his bold and energetic works on display at the Newport Beach Central Library gallery deserve attention from a modern audience and will leave a lasting impression.

"Beyond the Brushstrokes: Paintings by James Strombotne" at Newport Beach Central Library, 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach, (949) 644-3309, www.newportbeachlibrary.org. 9 a.m. Through July 6. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[THEATER]

Gasps and Laughs

The 39 Steps

If you love a little comedy and zaniness with your mystery and suspense, check out this International City Theatre production adapted from John Buchan's novel and from Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 thriller of the same name. The film's *North By Northwest*-like concept involves a man who has unwittingly stumbled on a den of spies called the 39 Steps who are out to steal some British military secrets. However, the fun twist about this play is that almost all of the more than 100 characters are played by only four actors. So expect plenty of costume changes, multiple characters being performed at once, an onstage plane crash, references to other Hitchcock films and, most hilariously of all, the entire suspense genre to be turned on its head!

The 39 Steps at Beverly O'Neill Theatre, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 436-3645. 8 p.m. Through July 8. $30-$35. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/06/21

[LITERARY EVENTS]

Readers Welcome

Bookworm Brawl

Who among us nerds doesn't love a little friendly competition? Test your literary knowledge at the Bookworm Brawl, a monthly event at the 1888 Center at which readers, book-lovers and anyone who generally loves a good tome will vie for some awesome prizes. Bring a group of up to six enthusiastic bibliophiles—or come on down solo and join a group—and answer some trivia questions about some of the 'good, the bad and the literary," according to the event site. Head up to the Center beforehand and check out a book or buy a coffee—with your ticket purchase, you receive a nifty 10 percent discount at the bookshop. So hooray! Everybody wins.

Bookworm Brawl at 1888 Center, 115 N. Orange St., Orange, (657) 282-0483, 1888.center. 7 p.m. $5. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

GUITAR HEROINE

Nancy Wilson of Heart

Guitar great Nancy Wilson takes center stage in this solo performance, singing the songs of Heart (which she used to perform with sister Ann) and more while steamrolling you back to a time when it was actually music, not props, that slayed legions of fans. Wordsmiths and musicians of the highest order, the rock & roll queens of Heart changed a generation and blew open the doors even further—don't miss your chance to see this iconic badass in action.

Nancy Wilson of Heart at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8366; thecoachhouse.com. 8 p.m. $30. —SR DAVIES

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www.thecoachhouse.com

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8/27	AMAHDA SHIRES
8/30	MIDGE URE AHD PAUL YDUHG
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9/7	JUSTIH HAYWARD
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Swish You Were Here

Miss Shabu brings the all-you-can-eat shabu shabu experience to new levels

BY EDWIN GOEI

I began this review at the end, when our waiter, a chummy chap named Phil, dropped off the check and with it plastic cups of a sweet slushed-ice dessert called sikhye. I didn't expect the icy treat, nor did I know it was part of Miss Shabu's all-you-can-eat shabu shabu price, but after nearly two hours of punishing my oral cavity with scalding-hot morsels plucked straight from the pot, the soothing slush was exactly what I needed. What a perfect conclusion to a meal that was already perfect!

A lot of the credit goes to Phil. Earlier, he'd informed us that Miss Shabu's owners were also responsible for Mr. BBQ, the wildly popular all-you-can-eat Korean barbecue in Fullerton. He'd asked us if we had been there (we hadn't) or tried any other all-you-can-eat shabu places.

As AYCE shabu has been the rage lately, we told him we'd eaten at quite a few. There was Mo-Mo-Paradise in Rowland Heights that boasted a self-serve boba drink station and curry rice. Broth in Cerritos featured induction plates invisibly incorporated into the tables. But the most memorable was Shabuya in La Mirada, which had individual shabu pot set-ups per diner.

Phil was most interested in what we thought of Shabuya, located just a few blocks away, as it's Miss Shabu's main competition.

"We liked it a lot," I said, "but the meat is better here."

"And so is the service!" my companion exclaimed, causing him to blush.

She meant it: Phil was a doting host. There was never a point at which we were wanting of anything, especially refills of meat. And when he saw that our ponzu and goma sauce bowls had become diluted from all the dipping, he brought out fresh ones.

But the highlight of the meal was when Phil cooked jook in front of us. It happened after we finished the shabu shabu. He scooped out all but half a cup of the reduced cooking liquid and started the porridge by boiling rice in the pot. We watched as he stirred and stirred, slowly coaxing the grains until everything attained the consistency of silk. He then cracked a raw egg into the mix, drizzled in a stream of sesame oil and sprinkled on a garnish of dried seaweed.

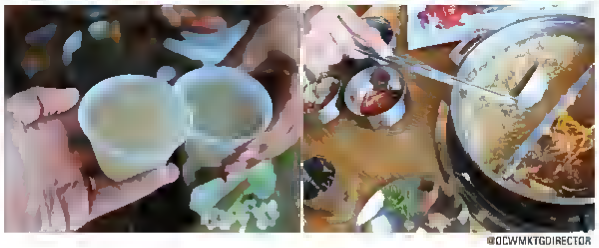
When the jook was finished, he invited us to dig in. I took a spoonful and realized it was a revelation in an evening full of revelations. It wasn't unlike risotto—creamy, starchy, a slow-moving sludge—but it was better than that. It was rich without being overbearing and had an excess of umami without help from even a molecule of cheese.

A lot of the flavor probably came from the large quantities of meat I'd swirled in the roiling broth in the hour before Phil made the jook. All but one of the six cuts of beef Miss Shabu offered were USDA Prime. This meant each paper-thin slice had a marbling pattern that resembled fine lace. And as with all shabu shabus, be it the all-you-can-eat kind or à la carte, the denser the marbling, the better the experience. That night at Miss Shabu, nearly everything I ate—whether it was the USDA Prime chuck eye, the brisket, the rib-eye, the top blade or even the USDA Choice short rib—was submissively soft and disintegrated with little effort or chewing.

The only exception was the beef belly, which was striped with thick bands of fat and thus cooked down to a rubbery texture. If you must try it, ask for a half portion. In fact, I recommend asking for half portions on everything. This way you leave room for the other proteins, such as the scallops, the salmon, the whole shrimp and the Kurobota pork tenderloin—all of which were just as good as the beef.

If I have one regret, it's that I became too full to try the chicken breast, the pork belly, the lamb, the white fish, the baby octopus, the squid and the mussels. And on the meticulously arranged platter of vegetables that came with the meal—tofu, mushrooms, fish cakes, etc.—I only managed to make a small dent.

I did, however, extract all the meat from the half-crab that hid in the depths of the spicy seafood broth, which I think was the reason Phil recommended it for one of our two shabu shabu soup bases. Choosing the soups was the second thing we did that night. The first was learning Phil's name. It was on his shirt on a blinking, red LED nametag, which, by the way, didn't just say, "Phil." It said, "Phil :)"



@OCWMKTGDIRECTOR

MISS SHABU

5450 Beach Blvd., Ste. 102, Buena Park, (714) 464-3222. Open Sun.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-9:45 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-10:45 p.m. Dinner, $30.99 per person. Full bar.

WHAT THE ALE

» SARAH BENNETT

Double Your Donation

Getting more beer for your money is always a good thing, and the owners of OC's biggest upstart brewery know it. That's why the team behind Brewheim Beer Makers—currently under construction in Anaheim—is offering to give you more than double your dollars back in brewery gift certificates if you donate to its Indiegogo campaign, which is live through the end of the month.

It's not that Brewheim, which hopes to have its large 30-barrel brewhouse up and running later this year, particularly needs the money. According to the project's video, the goal is more to create awareness of Aleheim's newest addition (a crowded field with 14 breweries in city limits) and start building a community of customers that will make Brewheim its go-to local taproom.

Brewheim's massive location in the developing Platinum Triangle neighborhood is already being built out, according to a conceptual layout created by CLTVT, a brewery consulting firm that has helped San Diego heavy lifters such as White Labs, Ballast Point and Saint Archer as well as smaller breweries including Bottle Logic's Placentiacompound.

"The brewhouse is designed to be efficient," says CLTVT co-founder Will Camacho in the project video. "It has growth in mind."

Brewheim co-owners Dan Ward and Eric Ferguson also hired skilled brewmaster Derek Wasak, who brewed on the East Coast before moving west to work at Stone Brewing Co. He plans to draw from both traditional (lagers!) and modern beer styles (hazy!) for his taplist, unleashing his creativity to make approachable beers packed with flavor (a flagship is a hybrid SoCal Lager).

"We also plan to work with some local distilleries and wineries to source barrels and age our beers to make some interesting and complex (and delicious) experimental beers," Wasak says.

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CAUSE AN EFFECT

Make dinner a selfless act by joining us for a fundraiser to support Alzheimer's Association. Come in to **any Orange County, CA Chipotle location** on **Thursday, June 7th** between **10:45am and 10:00pm**. Bring this flyer, show it on your smartphone or tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 50% of the proceeds will be donated to Alzheimer's Association.

CHIPOTLE

Online orders will not be included in the fundraiser, and To ensure your purchase is counted in the fundraiser, be sure to order and pay in-restaurant. Gift card purchases during the fundraisers do not count towards card donated sales, but purchases made with an existing gift card will count.

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COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE

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OC WEEKLY good feels
COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE

GREG NAGEL

DIY Steak

Beef up your Father's Day

BY GREG NAGEL

If the summer sun sets on Father's Day and your dad's belly is devoid of delicious steak, know that you have ultimately failed as a child. Fear not, as there's still time to make his dadbod a little more bodacious and also for you to glean a little bit of steak knowledge.

Sure, you can plop a $100 tomahawk down on your $100 Weber grill and hope for the best, but for consistent results, you're going to need an old-fashioned cast-iron skillet. If you don't have one, either borrow one for a week or buy a solid one online. Like any modern DIY project, check out a handy YouTube guide from Martha Stewart on how to properly clean and season the pan for best results. Remember, a good cast-iron skillet will last a lifetime, and they aren't just for dodging bullets in *Playerunknown's Battlegrounds*.

When shopping for beef, there are a few great butchers that sell a wide selection of prime, choice and select cuts. Although prime cuts are divine, there's nothing wrong with choice. As a dad myself, my absolute personal favorite is the rib-eye cap steak, which, unbeknownst to the cow, is the sluttiest of all cuts with extra-delicious marbled-meat lusciousness. If you've had a rib-eye, there's that extra-special part that is the best bite, and a cap steak is made up entirely of that best part—think utter meat euphoria, pun intended.

A few OC butchers operate like Rhino Records for meat fans: Electric City Butcher in Santa Ana and the Butchery in Brea, Costa Mesa and Crystal Cove. Just as with vinyl geeks, one might find regulars scanning the counter for the fresh deep cuts.

For prep, follow these simple rules: 1.) Great meat only needs a light dusting of salt and pepper. 2.) Sear the steak as hot as your stove will allow with good oil, two to three minutes on a preheated pan for all four sides. 3.) Cook to preferred wellness temp (get a meat thermometer). 4.) Finish with butter and let rest for at least seven minutes before slicing diagonally across the short side.

Once that steamy meat morsel hits your old man's shiny fork, you're sure to get a solid, "Att'll do, kid"—and maybe a fist bump.

If your pops is into smoked meats, look no further than the Butchery's Snake River Farms Black Wagyu briskets, which are a surprising $8.99 per pound through Father's Day. I suggest serving to dad while he's in a steamy clawfoot tub overlooking a hilly valley.

ELECTRIC CITY BUTCHER
201 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 474-9096, www.electriccitybutcher.com
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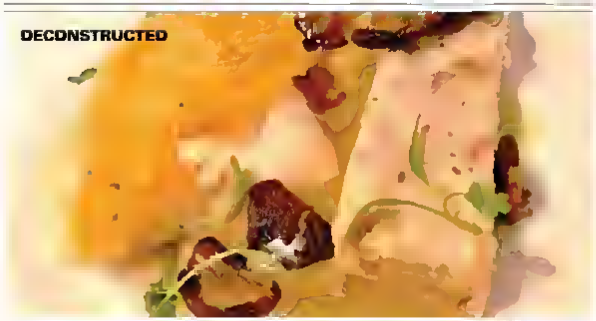


ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Prix-fixe Goals

Tom kha gai from Journeyman's Food & Drink

Committing to a prix-fixe menu is a slippery slope. On the one hand, you're getting value by agreeing to a set number of courses at a certain price. On the flip side, you're also putting your trust in a condensed number of dishes—and many times, you're at the whim of the "chef's choice." At the recently opened Journeyman's Food & Drink, prix-fixe dining is your only option. However, with four choices for each of your four courses, it offers more freedom than the typical set menu.

Our favorite taste during dinner was in the third course. With chicken plated four (or was it five?) different ways, chef Zachary Geerson's take on tom kha gai is directly influenced by his wife's Thai background. Infused with rich flavors of mushroom, coriander and coconut, it is a taste and texture revelation that not only respects the classic preparation, but also takes it to another level. Then again, Geerson manages to do the same with all his other courses. Journeyman's $75 meal is for the diner ready to take a chance and trust in something special. We have no regrets.

EAT THIS NOW

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

JOURNEYMAN'S FOOD & DRINK
1500 S. Raymond Ave., Fullerton, (714) 635-9025, journeymanfood.com

DRINK OF THE WEEK

» ANGIE THOMPSON

Mai Tai at Wahoo's

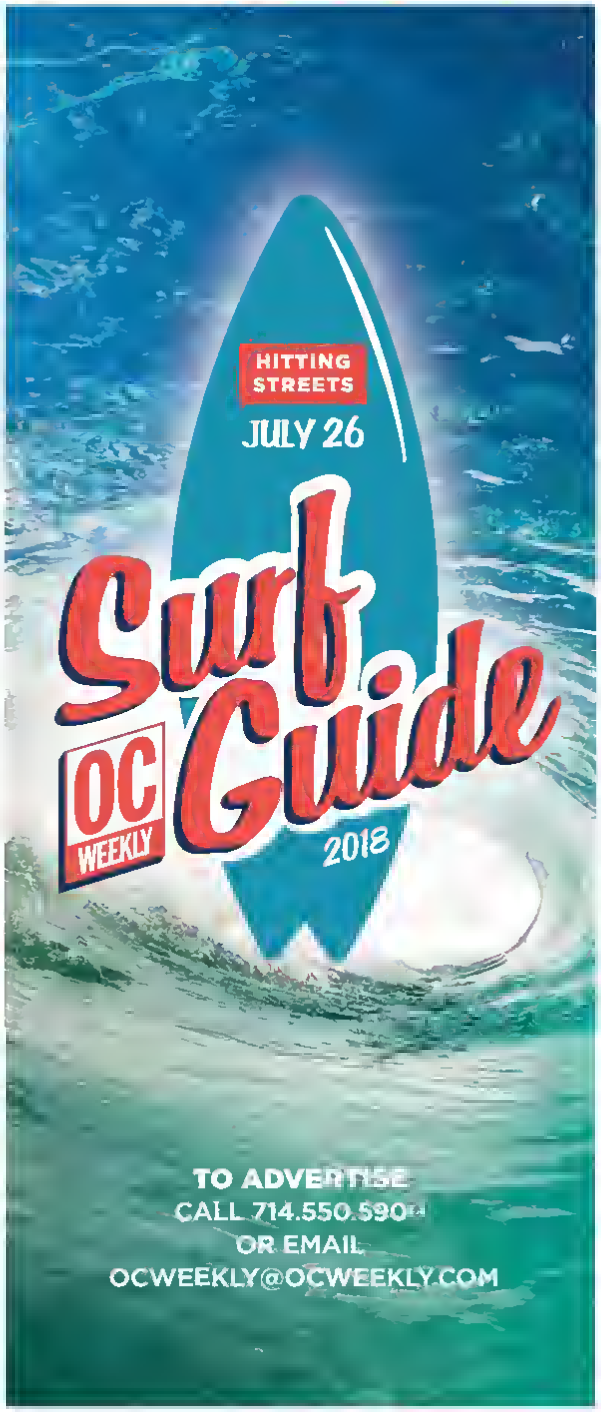
Known for its tasty fish tacos and salsa you can eat with a spoon, Wahoo's continues to crank out fast-casual, Baja-inspired delights. Three OC Wahoo's locations now also feature a full bar, and surprisingly, the best drink on the menu isn't the margarita, but rather the mai tai.

THE DRINK

When most people think of the mai tai, they relate it to sipping a concoction of syrupy grenadine, orange and pineapple juices, and the barest hint of rum with a flimsy paper umbrella to top it off. But the Wahoo's mai tai has none of those things. Instead, it's a nod to Trader Vic's 1944 classic, with three types of rum (Bacardi Superior, Captain Morgan and a Myer's Rum float), lime juice and agave syrup. The agave syrup is genius—its gentle sweetness doesn't overpower the drink the way OJ would. The result is a refreshing, only slightly tart cocktail in which rum is the star of the show.

ANGIE THOMPSON

WAHOO'S FISH TACOS
401 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 760-0290, 7891 Warner Ave., Huntington Beach, (714) 847-0555, 670 Spectrum Center Dr., Ste. 715, Irvine, (949) 753-0261, www.wahoos.com



Go West, Young Millennial

The Year of Spectacular Men is un-spectacular but still a feel-good watch

BY AIMEE MURILLO

COURTESY OF MARVISTA ENTERTAINMENT

Post-graduate malaise, quarter-life crises and relationship woes collide in *The Year of Spectacular Men*. This drama-comedy explores the life and relationships of its main character, Izzy Klein, and how a year of failed romances and taking chances in life and career moves prove that growing pains continue well into someone's mid-twenties. The indie film is also something of a family affair between director Lea Thompson (that's right—Marty McFly's mom) and her daughters Madelyn and Zoey Deutch, who are not only the main actresses in the film, but also wrote and scored (Madelyn) and produced (Madelyn and Zoey with dad Howard Deutch) the film.

The Year of Spectacular Men offers some familiar platitudes about growing up and finding oneself, even in the midst of one of the most difficult and foundational times in one's life, but it is a little clumsy in its delivery. The film opens with talking-head interviews with men who have dated Izzy describing their overall impressions of her, remarking on her oddball qualities, quirky personality and attractiveness, it plays like a strange comment section on a YouTube video. If nothing else, it does effectively flesh out the male romantic interests in the film individually and reflects their shallowness and problematic natures, albeit in varying degrees.

The audience's introduction to Izzy (Madelyn Deutch) seems to justify the men's descriptions, as she is a neurotic, socially awkward acting-school student who is completely unsure of her wants or how to carry herself. Her younger sister, Sabrina (Zoey Deutch), is the polar opposite: a successful and famous model, Sabrina whips some morale into Izzy to shake her out of her depressive doldrums and get her life in order.

As part of her sojourn, Izzy moves back home to Los Angeles to try to make it in the acting world while living with her sister and her boyfriend, Sebastian (Avan Jogia). This upsets Izzy's boyfriend, Aaron (Jesse Bradford), who takes the news as an affront and astutely calls out her impulsive nature and penchant to take up new passions that she eventually tosses aside.

With that years-long relationship over and done with, Sabrina encourages Izzy to pull herself up and start enjoying her twenties, offering to hook her up with a casting agent to kickstart her acting career. But instead of earnestly working on her craft and meeting with producers, Izzy takes up fling after fling, resulting in a series of hilariously awkward sexual encounters and realizations of her own shortcomings in her approach to relating to men. Complicated by holding onto a dark secret about her father's death and navigating the strained relationship between Sabrina and their mother (Lea Thompson) because of mom's newfound lesbianism, Izzy comes to realize that even though her own life is a mess, there are plenty of hardships to be felt even when you seemingly have it all.

While I'm aware the film's action is based around the heroine's romantic pursuits with men, it's disappointingly not as focused on Izzy's relationship with herself or her raison d'etre. There are a couple of Carrie Bradshaw-style voice-overs as she writes in a notebook, but they're too few and far between to consider an actual motif. There are also way, way, way, *way* too many songs in this film's soundtrack, so climactic moments lose their power to musical overkill.

The film's saving grace, however, and what made it a nice watch was the onscreen rapport between Izzy and Sabrina. At first their characters seemed too one-dimensional and annoying, but as the film marched on, their chemistry felt incredibly organic, funny and enviable. I had too good a time watching these sisters bicker and discuss men onscreen that I almost wish I had grown up with a sister myself. I'm sure as a director, Thompson didn't have to try hard to get the actresses to deliver these scenes together, and it easily helps make it an engaging film.

Knowing that Thompson herself has had very feminist leanings since her youth, I'm glad she's angling her camera to tell a story about a woman's life in her mid-twenties. But Madelyn Deutch's screenplay (which, she admitted after a screening, she had to rewrite numerous times and is based on actual events on her life) leaves a lot to be desired regarding the main protagonist. Despite these flaws, many viewers can still identify with Izzy's relationship dramas, as well as to the challenges that dating as a millennial can bring. If nothing else, there's always the humorous bromide Sabrina says to her mother and sister during one emotional scene: "Bitches need bitches."

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

THE YEAR OF SPECTACULAR MEN **was directed by Lea Thompson, written by Madelyn Deutch, and stars Madelyn Deutch and Zoey Deutch. Opens Fri**

Fly Away and Be Free

BY MATT COKER

MATEK FILM STUDIO

Ghost Stories. Professor Phillip Goodman exposes phony psychics and "supernatural" hooey, but his skepticism is put to the test. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 14, 4:30, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Xanadu. A struggling LA artist meets the girl who may hold the key to his happiness. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 14, 7 p.m. $15.*

Riffirax Live: Space Mutiny. Mike, Kevin and Bill riff wise (and live) while they along with you watch a very bad, very cheesy sci-fi epic. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., June 14, 8 p.m. (live); Tues., 7:30 p.m. (taped). $12.50.*

Brothers of the Wind. Gerardo Olivares' inspiring Austrian release has a 14-year-old nurturing a wounded baby eagle he encounters. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri. & Wed.–Thurs., June 20–21, 11:30 a.m., 1:30 & 3:30 p.m., Sat.–Sun., 10 a.m., Mon.–Tues., 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Phantom Thread. The 2017 rom-drama earned a sixth Oscar nomination for Daniel Day-Lewis, who claimed it would be his final movie. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 5:30, 8 & 10 p.m., Sat., noon, 2:45 & 5:30 p.m., Sun., noon & 2:45 p.m. $7–$10.*

The Big Lebowski. Jeff "The Dude" Lebowski is mistaken for millionaire Jeffrey Lebowski by goons sent to collect money from the mogul. The Dude is later hired by "the big" Lebowski to deliver a ransom to the kidnappers of his trophy wife. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 6 & 8 p.m., Sat., 5:30 & 8 p.m., Tues., 4 & 10 p.m. $7–$10.*

Wonder Woman. An Amazonian warrior in training leaves home to fight a war—and discovers her full powers and destiny. Attendees of the Source OC's Outdoor Movie Night can take advantage of coupons and discounts to neighboring stores and eateries, but movie seating is first-come, first-served. *The Source OC, 6940 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 521-8858; www.thesourceoc.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free. also at Beachfront Cinema at Huntington State Beach, Beach Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington Beach, beachfrontcinema.com. Sat., 5 p.m. $9–$19.99.*

Dr. Suess' The Lorax. Animated trifle about a 12-year-old boy who must learn about his world's creature protector the Lorax to win the affections of a girl. *Lake Forest Sports Park, 28000 Rancho Pkwy., Lake Forest; ca-lakeforest.civicplus.com. Fri. 7:30 p.m. Free*

Birdemic: Shock and Terror. *OC Weekly*'s Friday Night Freakouts entry is writer/director James Nguyen's tender love story/graphic horror shocker/urgent ecological warning from 2010. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11 p.m., Sat., 9:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Singin' In the Rain. MGM's lauded 1952 musical rom-com spoofs the crossover from silent films to talkies. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 11:30 a.m., 2 & 4:30 p.m., Sun., 11:30 a.m., 2, 4:30 & 7 p.m., Mon., 3:30, 6 & 9:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Despicable Me 3. The Minions want back their old crime boss, but he considers himself retired. Bring your own blanket to protect the indoor-gymnasium floor. Food is available, but you can also bring your own. *City Gym and Pool, 1600 Palm Ave., Huntington Beach, (714) 960-1884. Sat., doors open, 7:15 p.m., screening, 8 p.m. Free*

Ferdinand. Disney hit about a bull trying to escape from his captors to avoid a date with El Primero, a famous bullfighter who never loses. *Eastside Community Park, 5400 Eastside Circle, Yorba Linda, (714) 961-7100. Sat., 8 p.m. Free*

The Jungle Book. It's the 2016 version of Disney's animated classic. *Carbon Canyon Regional Park, 4442 Carbon Canyon Rd., Brea, (714) 973-3160. Sat., 8 p.m. Free, free parking beginning at 6 p.m.*

There Will Be Blood. Day-Lewis as a miner who literally goes from rags to riches after striking oil. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 8 p.m. $7–$10.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Shadow cast Midnight Insanity performs in front of the screen. *Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $8.50–$11.50.*

Pom Poko. Studio Ghibli Fest 2018 continues with Isao Takahata's action-packed, ecological-anime fable about the clash between nature and human civilization. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 12:55 p.m. (English-language dubbed); Mon., 7 p.m. (Japanese with English subtitles); Wed., 7 p.m. (dubbed). $12.50.*

Magnolia. Oscar-nominated Tom Cruise plays a sexist motivational speaker, Jason Robards portrays his dying dad, and John C. Reilly shines as a sentimental beat cop. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.–Tues., 12:30, 4 & 8 p.m. $7–$10.*

Yanni: Live At the Acropolis. It's a 25th-anniversary screening of the concert flick, which has been restored cinematically and sonically to pristine elevator-music quality. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Tues., 7 p.m. $7–$10.*

Harold and Maude. Harold is so obsessed with death that he stages fake suicides, drives a hearse and attends funerals of people he did not know. Harold's outlook changes when he meets Maude, an effervescent 79-year-old woman who loves life. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

Andy Irons: Kissed By God. Surfing champ Andy Irons' struggles with bipolar disorder and opioid addiction are covered in this documentary. *Regency Lido Theater, 3459 Via Lido, Newport Beach, (949) 673-8350. Wed.–Thurs., June 20–21. Call for show times and ticket prices.*

***Superman II:* The Richard Donner Cut.** This version of *II* restores much of the original director's footage. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.–Thurs., June 20–21, noon, 2:30, 5:15 & 7:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Serenity. Joss Whedon's 2005 sci-fi adventure picks up where his TV series *Firefly* left off. *Fullerton Public Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Wed., 4 p.m. Free*

The Met: Live in HD: Madama Butterfly. Anthony Minghella's breathtaking stage production that premiered in 2006. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Wed. Visit website for show times. $12.50.*

Justice League. Watch Zack Snyder's 2017 sci-fi fantasy from the DC universe under the stars. *Elks Lodge 1952, 11551 Trask Ave., Garden Grove, (714) 741-5200. Wed., activities, 6 p.m., screening, 8:30 p.m. Free*

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb. Stanley Kubrick's 1964 political-satire black comedy is loosely based on Peter George's thriller novel *Red Alert*. *Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

Mean Girls. It's an Orange County LGBT Pride 2018 benefit screening of the 2004 teen comedy. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed., 8 p.m. $15.*

Close Encounters of the Third Kind. The Steven Spielberg sci-fi classic is about a suburban dad who is visited by extra terrestrial intelligence. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., June 21, 1 p.m. Free*

Cars 3. Orange Public Library Foundation's Family Film Festival continues in the air-conditioned Community Room with the Disney/Pixar computer-animated franchise flick. Popcorn and snacks are available for purchase. *Orange Public Library, 407 E. Chapman Ave., Orange, (714) 288-2400. Thurs., June 21, 2 p.m. Free*

Drum Corps: At the Cinema: 2018 DCI Tour Premiere. The eighth annual event features six of the top ensembles of Marching Music's Major League in performances broadcast live into movie theaters nationwide. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., June 21, 5:30 p.m. $15.*

The Square. A Stockholm museum curator and do-gooder exposes his own narcissism with a controversial art installation, crime victimization and one-night stand with an American art journalist. *Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971. Thurs., June 21, 7 p.m. Free*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

All Hail the Art-o-mat

The LivingRoom Salon helps you buy real cheap art

BY ANTHONY PIGNATARO

Just beyond the curtain-framed entrance to the LivingRoom Salon in Costa Mesa and immediately to the left is what appears to be an old cigarette machine. At first glance, it seems to be just a kitschy relic shoved off to the side of this combination hair salon and art gallery (many municipalities banned cigarette machines a few decades ago). But take a few steps closer, and it becomes clear this particular machine, though once designed to dispense cancer sticks, now sells very small but very inexpensive works of art.

It's called an Art-o-mat, and there are more than a hundred of these flashy, refurbished cigarette machines scattered across the country. This particular device—the only one in Orange County—was installed about 15 years ago. It's also one of the earliest ever built—the fourth Art-o-mat ever put into circulation, in fact. And it fit perfectly with owner Lacey Quinn's idea of a gallery combined with a salon (her latest gallery show on Michael Bunuan's rock & roll photography opened on June 9).

"I was an art major, and I wanted to show people a different kind of experience," Quinn said. "It was so early on. I paid outright for the machine. I can't remember what I paid for it, but I kinda got a deal."

The Art-o-mat is simple to use. After giving $5 to the LivingRoom's nice receptionist, you get a shiny token. Drop the coin into the machine, then pull the knob for whichever artist you like. A few seconds later, a little cardboard box wrapped in cellophane drops to the bottom like a Snickers bar. Inside is a real (though minuscule) piece of art.

North Carolina artist Clark Whittington created the first Art-o-mat machine in the summer of 1997. Since then, his vending machines have popped up all over the U.S. According to the official Art-o-mat mission statement, "We believe that art should be progressive, yet personal and approachable. What better way to do this than with a heavy, cold, steel machine?"

Most Art-o-mat machines charge $5 for a piece of art. Of each purchase, $2.50 goes to the artist. Those wanting to contribute pieces to the machines have to keep their works within very strict dimensions, as well as adhere to other, somewhat humorous regulations. "Your pieces of art SHOULD NOT CONTAIN EDIBLES, MAGNETS, BALLOONS, GLITTER, CONFETTI OR ITEMS PROCESSED WITH PEANUTS," states the Art-o-mat artist guidelines. "No exceptions."

ANTHONY PIGNATARO

Though the Art-o-mat itself is just a very compact, labor-free store that sells works of art, the Art-o-mat company tells artists wanting a piece of the action to not focus so much on consumerism. "The focus of your end product should not be about commerce," according to the Art-o-mat artist guidelines. "Art-o-mat is about positive art experiences that can lead to long-term artist/buyer relationships. Keep in mind that in many cases, the Art-o-mat can be someone's first art purchase. Artists who show valid effort and specifically ask 'who bought me' or engage in social media often hear feedback from buyers."

To be honest, unless you're already familiar with the names displayed on the front of the Art-o-mat, picking a particular piece of art to buy has a grab-bag feel. After stopping by the LivingRoom and paying for my token, I searched the list and found nothing familiar. It wasn't until I saw the word *robot* next to the name ObviousFront that I felt comfortable dropping my token into the Art-o-mat's coin slot.

A few moments later, I was holding an old Pall Mall pack (it still had the cigarette brand's customer-service number printed on the inside of the cover) that was repainted gold and now sported stickers saying, "MADE IN U.S.A." and, "ONE ROBOT." Inside was a hollowed block of triple-laminated cardboard that concealed a robot-like charm made from old resistors and capacitors.

Though no wider than a quarter, the robot was undeniably cute. A card included with the box stated, "ObviousFront Capacitor Robots are built with lead-free solder using electronic components salvaged from discarded TVs and VCRs."

The artist ObviousFront (a.k.a. Dewitt Young) lives in Milan, Illinois. He has sold thousands of these little robot sculptures through Art-o-mat machines. "The first Capacitor people were made in the early 1980s," Young said in a June 4 email to me. "For years, I would custom build four or five figures a year as gifts for family and friends. In 2002, I began marketing the robots and eventually came up with a simple design that I could produce multiples of."

Young said his wife had first heard of Art-o-mat machines and, figuring it was a good fit, sent Whittington 100 of his little capacitor robots. Since then, Young said, he has sold more than 4,700 pieces.

"The project has a nice egalitarian feel to it, and the distribution and exposure are great," Young said. "A few places that had the robots in their machine have gone on to include my larger figures in their galleries."

As it is now, Quinn's Art-o-mat machine is mostly empty. The salon's receptionist had told me that the machine gets a lot of walk-in traffic, which Quinn confirmed. "I need to get it restocked," she said. "Everybody looks me up online."

ART-O-MAT
at the LivingRoom Salon, 125 Rochester St., Costa Mesa, (949) 631-0808; thelivingroomsalon.com

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

June 15-21

"ART OF BAJA CALIFORNIA" Juan Angel Castillo, Esau Andrade Valencia and Benito Ortega Vargas explore the scenic coastal geography of Baja California through paintings and sculptures. Open Thurs., 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Fri.-Sun., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Through Aug. 25. Casa Romántica, 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente. (949) 498-2139; casaromantica.org.

LONG BEACH PLAYHOUSE RADIO HOUR Annual Long Beach Playhouse fund raiser in which actors perform an old time radio show that lovingly roasts the city. Fri., 8 p.m. $60-$75. Keesal, Young & Logan, 400 Oceangate, Ste. 1400, Long Beach. (562) 436-1014; www.lbplayhouse.org.

"MOVING AT A SNAIL'S PACE IN GEOLOGICAL TIME" Artist Eric Stoner juxtaposes drawings, photographs, text, found objects and other materials to create complex collages. Opens Sat. Open Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Through Aug. 11. Free. Irvine Fine Arts Center, 14321 Yale Ave., Irvine. (949) 724-6880; irvinefinearts.org.

"PAPERCUT LOUNGE" A celebration of the power of print, from photocopied zines to published fine-art books. Part of the POW! WOW! Long Beach festival. Open Thurs., 2-6 p.m., Fri., 4-8 p.m., Sat., 1-7 p.m., Sun., noon-4 p.m. ArtX, 356 E. Third St., Long Beach; www.powwowlongbeach.com.

"REGARDING REALITY II" A group show of paintings done by recent graduates from Laguna College of Art + Design's MFA program. Open Wed.-Sun., noon-5 p.m. Through June 30. Free. 0 Art Salon, 205 N. Sycamore St., Santa Ana. (714) 835-6833; gartsalon.com.

SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED: AN UNSCRIPTED SPY THRILLER This fully improvised play skewers quintessential spy thrillers and famous mystery novels in pop culture. Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 5 p.m. Through July 7. $15-$28. Modjeska Playhouse, 21084 Bake Pkwy., Ste. 104, Lake Forest. (949) 445-3674; www.mphstage.org.

SKETCH AND DRAW WITH FABER CASTELL Instructor-led demonstration of drawing and sketching techniques using Faber-Castell art supplies. Sun., noon. $10 (includes materials). Catalyst Gallery at Art Supply Warehouse, 6630 Westminster Blvd., Westminster. (714) 891-3626; www.artsupplywarehouse.com/catalyst.php.

"THROUGH THE LENS, VOL. 4: JOSE CORDON" The photographer presents a wide array of fascinating character studies of rough-and-tumble women in urban spaces. Sat., 8 p.m. Free. The Social List, 2105 E. Fourth St., Long Beach. (562) 433-5478; thesocialistla.com.

TITANIC: THE MUSICAL A musical adaptation of the luxurious ocean liner's demise, focusing on various characters and the causes of its historic shipwreck. Thurs.-Sun., 8 p.m. Through June 24. $25-$40. Mysterium Theater at the La Habra Depot Playhouse, 311 S. Euclid Ave., La Habra. (562) 697-3311; mysteriumtheater.com.

LIVE MUSIC WEEKLY SCHEDULE

THURSDAY 6/14
Andrew Bloom 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Mando Cordova 7pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

FRIDAY 6/15
The Trip 9pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
DJ Blunk 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SATURDAY 6/16
Family Style 9PM-Close *Shebeen Bar*
DJ BB Guns 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SUNDAY 6/17
Jazz Brunch w/Mex Bennett
1pm- 3pm *Shebeen Bar*
Einstein Brown 5pm-7:30pm *Shebeen Bar*
[illegible]
Francois Dean 6pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

TUESDAY 6/19 COMEDY SPECIAL!
Katsy Chappell 8:45pm *DBN Lounge*
Aaron Weaver 9:05 pm *DBN Lounge*

WEDNESDAY 6/20
Papermoon Gypsys 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*

THURSDAY 6/21
Andrew Bloom 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Mando Cordove 7pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

FRIDAY 6/22
Juke Joint Preachers 8:30pm-9:30pm &
Guiter Shorty 9:30pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Ticketed Event
DJ Audissey 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SATURDAY 6/23
World Tour-Legends 7:30-9:00pm-Close
Ticketed Event
Jack Tempchin 7:30-9:00pm-Close
DBN Lounge ***Ticketed Event***
DJ BB Guns 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SUNDAY 6/24
Jazz Brunch w/Mando & G Force 1pm- 3pm
Shebeen Bar
Einstein Brown 5pm-7:30pm *Shebeen Bar*
Errol Bonnick 7:30pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Jack Tempchin 7:30-9:00pm-Close
DBN Lounge ***Ticketed Event*** *DBN Lounge*

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JULY 8 — PASION GITANA (SPANISH GUITAR)

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COURTESY OF BOB RODMAN

What About Bob?

Local musicians come together to support OC's senior super-fan

BY BRITTANY WOOLSEY

On most nights, it's easy to find Bob Rodman jamming to some local bands and snapping photos at the Wayfarer in Costa Mesa. And while with his white goatee, the man may resemble a band member's grandfather or even great-grandfather, he's simply a dedicated music-lover ... whom the musicians consider family, as well as a rock star in his own right.

And the day after Rodman turns 78, OC's music scene will come together to honor him. "Bobfest," as Saturday's event at the Wayfarer has been lovingly dubbed, will include half-hour performances by some of OC's hottest local acts, including Jeramiah Red, Big Monsta, Robert Jon & the Wreck, the Sugar, Parker Macy Blues Band, Shape Pitaki, Annie McQueen, and Andrew Corradini. Billy Kernkamp will MC the evening.

The concert not only celebrates Rodman's birthday, but it also raises funds for him. The Costa Mesa native began surfing the OC music scene a decade ago, after his wife died. Three years ago, he moved into his son's home in Highland, but Rodman was suddenly asked to leave with no notice a little more than a month ago. Since then, he's been couch-surfing with friends and family in Costa Mesa and Aliso Viejo. "I don't have any animosity toward it," Rodman says of his situation. "It's been just so amazing that everybody's rallied around me and wants to help. At my age, I find it difficult to get jobs." (However, he notes, the ride-sharing service Lyft recently took a chance on him by offering him a position as a driver.)

Parker Macy is among the friends allowing Rodman to stay with him. The owner of the Creme Tangerine record store in Costa Mesa, says helping Rodman was a no-brainer. "Bob's my best buddy," Macy says. "The only thing that becomes a priority when your best buddy needs help is to make sure he gets to where he needs to be."

The process of developing Bobfest started about two months ago, says Jimmy Hua, front man of Big Monsta. At first, the idea was playful, but once Rodman found himself without a consistent roof over his head, Hua and Macy began thinking about the idea more seriously. "When Parker and I started talking about this, it just clicked," Hua says. "We knew anybody who cared about Bob would do this, no problem and no questions asked."

Rodman recalls tearing up when about 20 OC band members and influencers in the music scene gathered around him to tell him about their plans for the event. "It was very emotional," he says. "I still think about it, and I get choked up," he says. "They're great friends. I wasn't expecting anything like this. I didn't have a goal set. I just wanted friends around me for my birthday. It was all a big surprise."

This isn't the first time the music community has rallied together for Rodman. When he had heart surgery and received a pacemaker in 2012, members of his favorite bands showed up in droves to share their support. He recalls music publicist Ashley Eckenweiler gifting him an iPod with all of his favorite songs so he could feel close to the music, even if the hospital lacked a music venue.

Music has always played a pivotal road in the now-great-grandfather's life. In his younger days, Rodman attended gigs for surf rockers such as Dick Dale at the Rendezvous Room in Balboa. In 1968, he proposed to his wife at an Italian restaurant that would one day become the Detroit Bar, then the Wayfarer.

Proceeds from this weekend's benefit event—including ticket sales and some merchandise, plus a raffle—will be donated to Rodman in hopes of helping him find a place to live. According to Macy, there's no exact goal for how much the group would like to raise for Rodman, they'd like to gather enough for at least a month's rent and the deposit on a place.

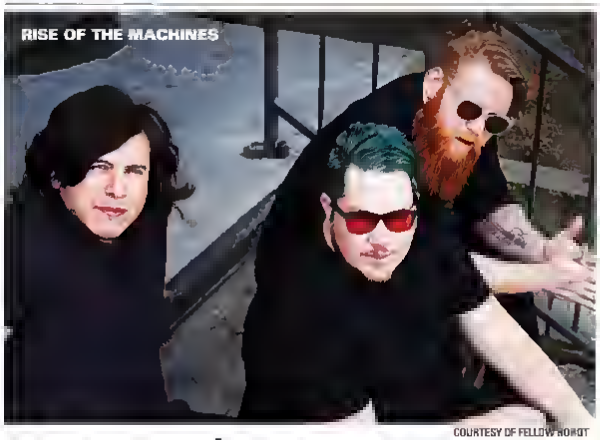
Hua says the event is the epitome of what a local show should be nowadays. "We just can't be playing or booking shows simply because we're in a band," he says. "Unfortunately, the situation with Bob came about, and we all couldn't think of a better thing to do than just rallying our friends together that he loves and knows."

Rodman's dedication, regularly attending up to three shows per night, has made him an integral part of the scene, says McQueen, the only woman on the Bobfest lineup. "More than anything, we're really happy to do it and really excited," she says. "No one would even give it a second thought. There were more people that wanted to be part of it that we didn't have time for. We all love him so much that it's like, 'Hell yeah, we're going to party for Bob.'"

Jeramiah Red's lead vocalist and guitarist, Ian Cullen, recalls Rodman being one of his band's first supporters. "We didn't know a lot of people coming into [the scene]," he says. "We were a little bit of the outcasts. One of the first people we got to meet was Bob. He came to one show and just never stopped. He was always there taking pictures and hanging out. He's like family, and you take care of your family."

BOBFEST

featuring Jeramiah Red, Big Monsta, Robert Jon & the Wreck, The Sugar, Parker Macy Blues Band, Shape Pitaki, Annie McQueen, and Andrew Corradini, at the Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com. Sat., 6 p.m. $10. 21+.



COURTESY OF FELLOW ROBOT

Bot Rock

Fellow Robot meld the worlds of indie and sci-fi

BY JOSH CHESLER

If you're a fan of indie music, lengthy stories and cheeky science fiction, then you'll like Fellow Robot. The Long Beach band have only been releasing music—such as their first two singles, "Clone Baby" and 'Become the Sky"—within the past couple of months, but the idea behind Fellow Robot had actually been knocking around lead vocalist Anthony Pedroza's brain for a few years.

"In 2016, I started writing a sci-fi book called *The Robot's Guide to Music*," Pedroza says. "At the time, I was in a lot of pain and needed an escape from it, so I decided to go full robot and immerse myself into the character Fellow Robot. In the book, there are several characters who are songwriters, and I thought, 'What would this book be like if it were accompanied with music?'"

Though he created an entire literary universe, Pedroza knew he would require further assistance in crafting a soundtrack fitting for such an elaborate project. His first recruit was drummer Luis Renteria, fellow musicians such as Jon Zell and Mike Adams would join in after hearing what their cohorts in the Long Beach music scene were up to. In a matter of months, Pedroza, Renteria and their friends had enough material for several dozen songs.

Pedroza's timeless influences, including Johnny Cash, melded with Renteria's indie leanings to create their Fellow Robot sound. Renteria also added his own recording studio and experience in the producer's chair to the mix. Without his help—and some assists from handfuls of the South Bay's top local acts—Pedroza's half-finished songs and thoughts may never have seen the light of day. "He'd bring the tracks to my studio—without me having listened to them—and I'd have to develop and record a drum track, typically in front of whoever we were recording next," Renteria recalls. "I felt some pressure to perform in front of these super-, *über*-talented musicians, but it was so much fun. We had so many Long Beach musicians in the studio; it really was a treat to share beers and horror stories between takes."

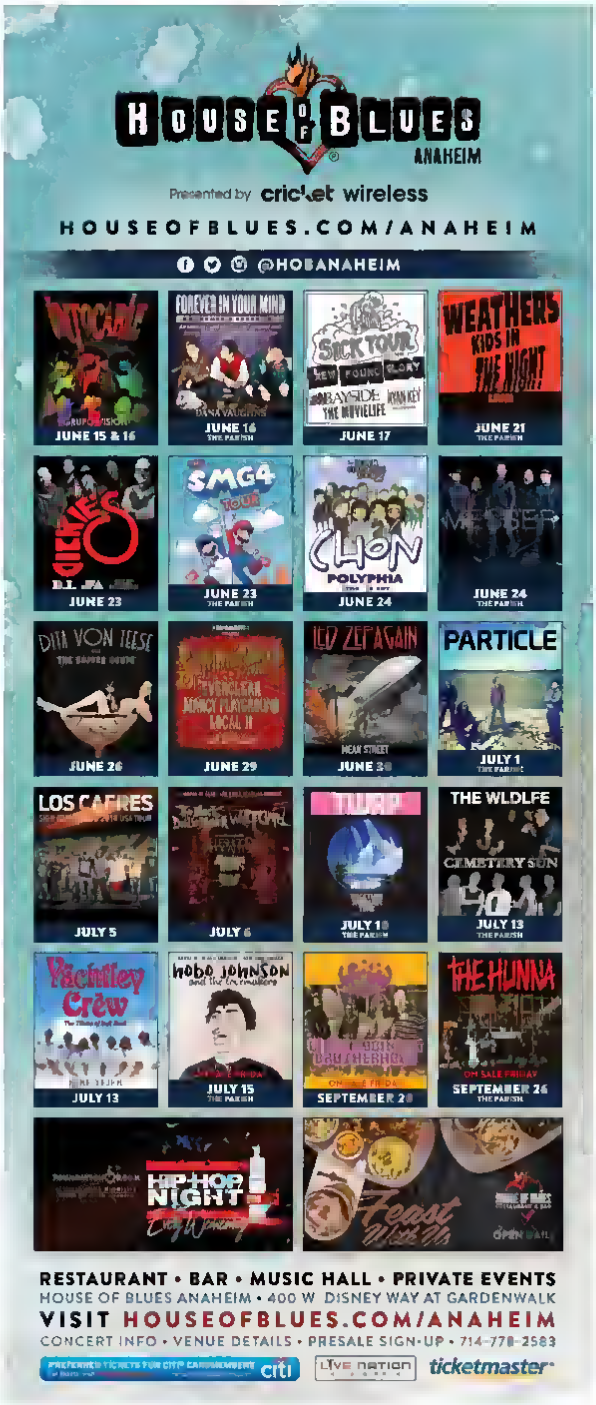
"Creating and recording this project has been incredibly fun and fulfilling," Pedroza adds. "This has been a project of saying 'yes.' Luis and I work really well together, and I think it's because we never say 'no' to each other. I've brought Luis almost 50 songs, and while many did not make the cut for the album, we still produced every song. *The Robot's Guide to Music* is very human, and I wanted the best humans to express themselves on the album."

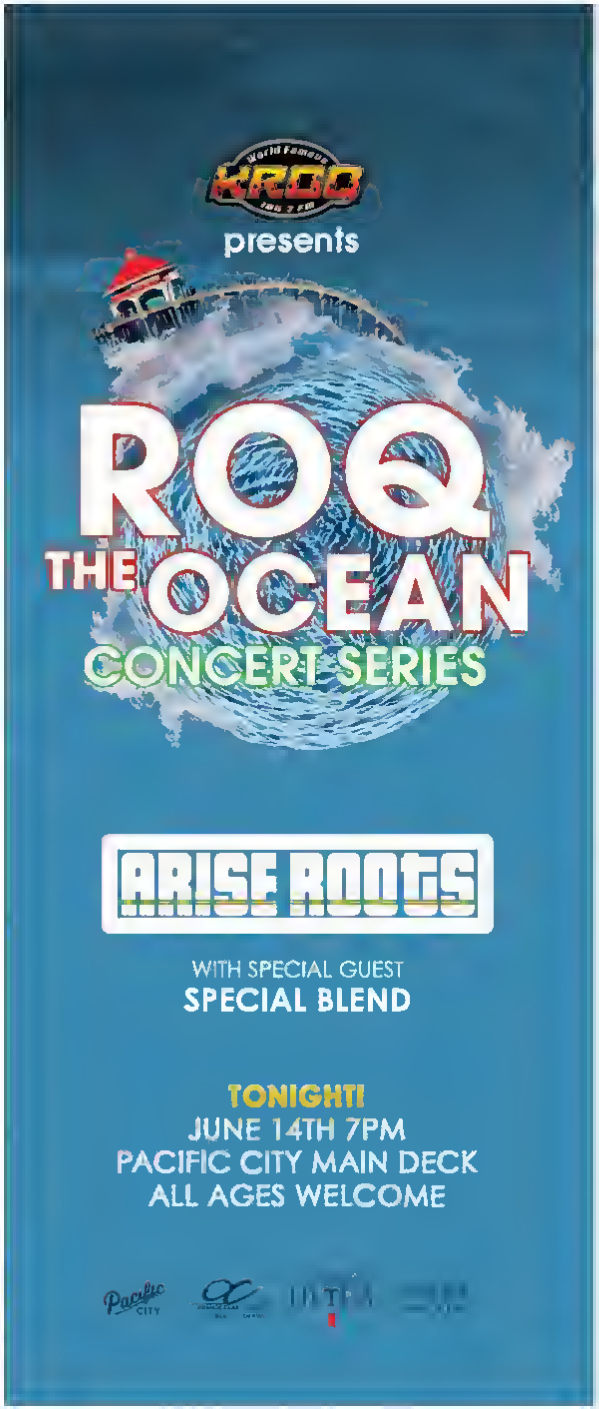
While some bands struggle to put together a decent follow-up to their debut E.P, Pedroza and Renteria are already preparing to release six records. Following more in the path of great sci-fi epics than standard albums, the first trilogy—which they're approximately halfway finished recording—will focus on Fellow Robot before the last three shift gears to feature the dark side of Pedroza's universe, the FoeBots.

Beyond the dueling trilogies, the guys are working on some tunes for an upcoming TV series while continuing to play all of their favorite Long Beach bars about once per month. More than anything, though, Pedroza and Renteria just want to share the good vibes and unique perspective that can only be brought with the tales of a 140-year-old robotic musician.

"It's good music for good people by good robots," Renteria says. "We are musicians who really enjoy creating music. We hope [people] listen with the same amount of joy we felt while putting it all together."

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM





concert guide»

COURTESY OF NEW FOUND GLORY

Friday

THE HIGGS; SHRED IS DEAD 8 p.m., $10, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com

INTDCARLE 8 p.m., $42.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

MECHANICAL ROOTS; LOST ON EDGE 9 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

PINBACK, SUMATRABAN. 9 p.m., $20, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com

SHECK WES, VALEE 8 p.m., $22, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com.

Saturday

RDRFEST, FEATURING JERAMIAH RED, RIG MONSTA, RDRERT JDN & THE WRECK, THE SUGAR, PARKER MACY BLUES BAND, SHAPE PITAKI, ANNIE MCDUEEN, ANDREW CDRRADINI 8 p.m., $10, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com

FDREVER IN YOUR MIND—THE EUPHDRIC EXPERIENCE. 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

INTDCARLE 8 p.m., $42.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

MAC SABBATH; METALACHI, ELVISS. 6:30 p.m., $5, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com

PINBACK, SWDLLEN RRAIN 9 p.m., $20, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995. www.martysonnewport.com.

Sunday

NEW FDUND GLDRY 6 p.m., $29.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

PIRATE VIP 18TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469. www.slidebarfullerton.com

SINÉAD HARNETT 9 p.m., $22.50, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

Monday

RLANCD NIND; IPSUM CABALLAM, GREEN SAHARA 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

LITTLE DRAGDN 9 p.m., $35, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com

Tuesday

TDMDRRDW'S TULIPS 9 p.m., $8, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com

Wednesday

THE BASH DDGS, SPENDTIME PALACE, THE JACKS 9 p.m., $12, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

THE BLACK NDISE, COMPLEXIONS, CHARLES FULLWDDD 8 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

THE NIGHT BEFDRE WARPED, WITH RUNAWAY KIDS, FAKE FIGURES, BARRIERS, SLOWTRIP, DJ TRAVIS MIGUEL DF ATREYU 6 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469. www.slidebarfullerton.com

THE RED PEARS 9 p.m., $8, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.constellationroom.com

Thursday, June 21

RUTTERTONES 9 p.m., $25, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995. www.martysonnewport.com

DAY DF MUSIC—TRITONE MUSIC ACADEMY, FEATURING THE NDSEBLEEDS; KITTIES IN THE NAME DF; IZZY & THE DDLLHDUSE BDYS; RUN AMDK, ROBOT DEATH PRINCESS, SPARKLE MADNESS 5 p.m., free, all ages. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469. www.slidebarfullerton.com.

DAY DF MUSIC WITH MDMMY'S LITTLE MDNSTERS 3 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469. www.slidebarfullerton.com

THE GET UP KIDS; THE CASKET LOTTERY 9 p.m., $22, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com.

THE SHRILLS, BIG FUN, KAMIKAZE CO-PILOT 8 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com

WEATHERS 7 p.m., $12, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583. www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

Retroactive Blessings

Without snooping, I came across texts between my wife, "Mary," and a guy, "Jeremy," of a very sexual nature. While I would be okay if she were doing this and I knew about it, this has been going on since before we met. (We've been together 10 years.) She says she has never met him in person (despite communicating with him for more than a decade!) and this was the only thing she was doing that she thought would have been out of bounds. Again, if I had known, it would have been fine. I'm not okay with her being with other guys, but I know harmless flirting can be a release. Still, I have issues with anxiety and depression, and this is definitely triggering me. I do not want to snoop, and I want to trust her, but I am having a hard time with both. Prior to this, it never occurred to me that Mary would do anything that had a whiff of dishonesty about it. But her having kept this from me for as long as I have known her has made me question that. I don't want to keep bringing this up to her, but I am struggling with it. What do you think I should do?

Upset In The Midwest

I think you should get over it, UITM.

Easier said than done. I realize, particularly with the twin burdens of anxiety and depression. But if you would have been fine with this had you known—if there was no reason for Mary to hide this LTR-of-sorts from you—the best way to prove that to her is by giving it your retroactive blessing.

You're right, UITM: Mary shouldn't have hidden this from you. But she assumed—incorrectly, as it turned out—you would have a problem with those texts. It was a reasonable assumption on her part, since swapping flirty texts with a stranger is regarded as "out of bounds" by most. While this makes Mary's failure to disclose look a little worse, we live in a culture that defines absolutely everything as cheating—don't get me started on the idiocy that is "micro-infidelities" and the idiots pushing that toxic concept—and as a consequence, people not only lack perspective (oh, to live in a world where everyone regarded harmless flirtation as no big deal!), but also the language to honestly discuss our need for a little harmless erotic affirmation from someone who isn't obligated to find us attractive, i.e., not a spouse or partner.

Put yourself in Mary's shoes for a moment: When should she have told you about Jeremy? What would you have done if on the third or fourth date, she looked up from her menu and said, "I've been swapping flirty texts with this guy for oh, the last several years. I have no interest in him in real life, we've actually never even met in person, but I enjoy his texts and would like to keep swapping texts with him. I hope that's not a problem." You would have dumped her on the spot, right? She didn't want to stop, she didn't know how to talk about it, she hesitated, and . . . a decade went by.

If there's nothing else—if no other shoes drop—give this your retroactive blessing.

I have an unusual situation. I met a girl I am crazy about. She didn't really have any interest in me except for the occasional drink, she just wanted to be friends. A few months later, I saw her at a bar. We drank a bit more than we could handle and slept together and I thought we would start dating. A few weeks went by, and she always had an excuse as to why we couldn't hang out. Then one night, she texted to say she wanted to see me, but I could tell she was tipsy. We went out for a few more drinks, then slept together again. A week later, the same thing happened. When I contact her during the day, she never seems interested. But I run over like a starved dog when she calls at night. (Sadly, because of stress and overwork, I usually can't get hard when I go over. That's become a big issue.) She's very attractive, and I'm surprised she has any interest in me at all, but it's only when she's drunk. Besides her looks, I'm attracted to her personality and intelligence. I don't know what attracts her to me, except maybe I'm her booty call, but recently I have been terrible at it. The last time we hooked up, she told me she's quitting drinking. Maybe she won't contact me anymore. My question: Is it worth pursuing this if I get my ED situation fixed? Or should I just move on, and if she does contact me one night, I just say, "Sorry, not interested"? It's obvious she's using me. But we actually have good conversations despite us both being drunk, and it kinda seems like a date of some sort. What do you think?

Summoned With A Text

She's interested in you for only one thing (sex) and at only one time (when she's drunk, horny and out of other options), and she can summon you with a single drunken late-night text. It's actually not an unusual situation, SWAT—millions of people have received similar summonses. So long as the summoned person doesn't want anything more than sex from the person issuing the summons, Yahtzee. Everybody gets laid, nobody gets hurt. But if the person being summoned wants more—if the summonee has unrequited feelings for the summoner—the summoned person is going to get hurt. Because what the summoner is essentially saying is this, "I want sex; I don't want *you*." Even if the sex is good, the rejection that comes bundled in that summons stings, and the hurt grows over time.

So, yeah, stop answering that drunk girl's summonses. Let her know you want more than sex, and if she's not interested in something more, you're not interested in her. As for those erectile issues, SWAT, try having sex sober earlier in the evening and with someone who doesn't regard your dick as a consolation prize. I bet they clear right up.

I am a transgender man, and my girlfriend is a transgender woman, and we have hit a plateau. Intimate time is rare, communication is minimal, and although I care for her deeply, I do not like her as a person and no longer want to get married. I have considered asking if we could open up the relationship, but I doubt that is the solution. How does one end a long-term relationship?

Help Relationship Transition

Whatever you do, HRT, please—*please*—don't ask to open up your relationship when what you really want is out. A lot of people who want out do this, and it's why so many people believe all requests to open a relationship are a sign the relationship is doomed. People who want out but ask for open usually get out in the end. People who want open and ask for open and get it tend to stay. But since most couples in open relationships aren't public about it (most are more comfortable being perceived as monogamous), people hear about the insincere requests that preceded a breakup and conclude all requests are insincere.

Anyway, HRT, how does one end a long-term relationship? One uses one's words. If "I love you" are the three magic words, then "I'm leaving you" are the three tragic words. Seeing as intimacy is rare and communication is minimal, it shouldn't come as a shock to your soon-to-be-ex fiancée.

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com), come hang out with the lesbians of the* Lez Hang Out *podcast. Contact Dan via email at mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, find the Savage Love Letter of the Day at thestranger.com/slog.*

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Toke of the Week

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Everyone knows the scene in *Pineapple Express* in which James Franco teaches Seth Rogen how to light the cross-joint. Franco instructs Rogen to light the sides while he lights the front and inhales for a trifecta puff of glory. "Are you ready?" Franco asks.

"Ready," Rogen replies, igniting two lighters.

"Blast off," Franco whispers, before coughing out his lungs.

The film made stoners yearn to hit a cross-joint. But unless you're the ongoing champion of joint-rolling, you likely can't roll one. (I definitely can't, considering I learned how to roll smokeable joints three years ago.)

Denver-based MJ Arsenal (*mjarsenal.com*) recently brought this figment of cannabis cinematography to the world with a "double rollie bubbler" which allows you to stick two joints into the side of a bubbler and smoke them at the same time. I filled the glass of the palm-sized piece with a tiny bit of water, then rolled one baseball bat–sized joint with Sour Diesel and a slightly smaller joint of Green Ribbon, an indica hybrid. I used two lighters, just like Rogen, to light both joints, and indeed experienced an existential blast-off. After two hits (which, I guess, is technically four), I didn't understand that I was sitting on the couch.

If only Henry Anslinger (that racist asshole) could see the smoking apparatuses of today.

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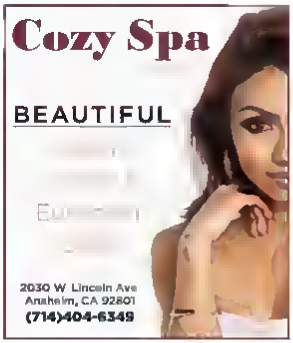

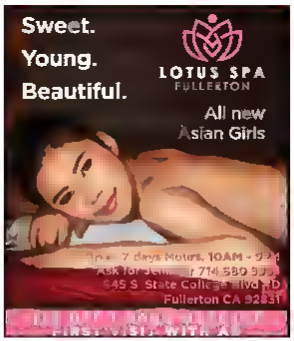

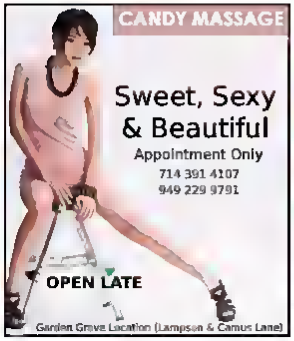

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Market Analyst. Analyze the variables that affect the sale of products and services, etc. Reqd: BA in any major & 5 yr experience as Market Analyst or related. Send resume to Flyalco, Inc. Attn: H/R, 1265 N. Grove St., Ste A-B, Anaheim, CA 92806

Kevin Tsai Architecture, Inc. seeks Architectural Drafter. Bachelor's in Architecture & 12 mths exp. reqd. Under supervision of licensed architect create models, bldg plans. Work site: Los Angeles, CA. Mail resume to: 834 S Broadway, Ste. 1206, Los Angeles, CA 90014

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Graphic Designer. F/T; Design and create minimalist designs and arts by melding sports and design, at least 2 yrs of exp. in Graphic Design. Graphic Art or related field reqd. Resume to: Minimalist Design Studio, Inc. <\#@> 13217 Jamboree Rd., Ste 268, Tustin, CA 92782

Designer (Irvine, CA) Collaborate to brain storm ideas to visualize data or design content for clients. Work includes wireframes, comps/drafts, edits & final designs. Bachelor's, Graphic Design, 6 months experience before or after bachelor's degree. Mail resume to Tamara Hlava, Column Five Media, Inc., 5151 California Ave., #230, Irvine, CA 92617

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Accounting Clerk. Compute and record numerical data into ledger. Req'd: 3 months Exp. as an Accounting Clerk or related. Mail Resume: Hayfield University, 2495 E. Orangethorpe Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831

Globalink Securities, Inc. seeks Financial Analyst. Master's in finan. or related field reqd. Conduct financial analysis regarding value for use by brokers. Work site: Pasadena, CA. Mail resume to: 3452 E. Foothill Blvd., Ste. 1040, Pasadena, CA 91107

Market Research Analysts. Collect & analyze market data to predict & assess company's position in solar panel bus. Reqd: BA/BS in Econ., Intl'l Bus., or Bus. Admin. Mail resume: Wegen Solar Inc. 1511 E. Orangethorpe Ave. #D, Fullerton, CA 92831

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Never Enough Murals

'Summer of Color' brings walls of street art to the Laguna Arts District

BY LISA BLACK

SIRENA BY BRETT CRAWFORD/PHOTO BY LISA BLACK

The animals charge northward across the west-facing wall of the Fuse Building: horse, goose, snake, wolf and tiger. The creatures have a transparency, as if they were projected, and the guide marks used in the mural's execution are clearly visible. The words *Creatio Continua* are emblazoned behind the beasts, assuring us creation/creativity is indestructible, while the soft colors and see-through qualities suggest otherwise. Best take care, as it could all disappear. The entirety of Faith XLVII's work spills off the confines of the building, as if the animal traces were captured in a frantic second as the spirit menagerie ran by.

In reality, it took several days up and down an orange scaffold for the South African, who recently moved to LA, to finish. "She's a phenomenon, a force of nature," says "Summer of Color" co-curator Torrey Cook. "Her work seems delicate in its touch, but her strength is undeniable. Her voice ... reaches right down to touch your core as a human being."

Cook and co-curator Ben Rubin of Elephants and Castles fine-art printing, are assembling diverse artists to cover the Laguna Arts District. The town's Arts Commission granted permission to "Summer of Color" with a swift "yes," likely because Mo Honarkar now owns all the buildings' walls. Along with his daughter Hasty and their partners in Laguna Creative Ventures, they hope to "maintain and protect Laguna's creative roots and vibrant culture, [and are] committed to its artistic heritage and want to see it thrive again."

Using gobsmacking color, Spanish artist Okuda transformed the entryway and front of the Art-A-Fair with extreme whimsy—you may never feel blah about polka dots, rays, stripes, kaleidoscopes, squiggles, 3-D prisms or primary-color blocks again. The patterns interact with the architectural playfulness of the façade. But the internationally recognized artist's most bewitching work here is his 153-feet-by-12-feet mural on the Art-A-Fair's west side. It's so long you have to crunch your way back through a gravel parking lot to take it all in. In *Palace of Dreams*, a nude female in deep-hued triangles and prisms reclines in a field of geometric vibrancy, attended by squat birds. One has a red head with stars spangling its blue wings, another hints at the California Republic flag.

Okuda, who started off painting old factories and lost railways in the mid-1990s, instills an optimism in me. Maybe the deepening precariousness of our country will right itself before, you know, it's too late? Cook, who ran Artists Republic gallery for years, feels a similar way in response to Faith's distinct style. "In a world that is so unsettled, and it's sometimes hard to know which way to go or what to do or say, to have someone like Faith as a beacon—well, I just feel lucky."

Okuda and Faith are longtime friends in the apparently small world of in-demand global street art, often putting each other up during their travels. For "Summer of Color," all the artists stay at the live/work spaces in [seven degrees], an event center in the northernmost building in the district, closest to the Sawdust Festival.

Younger mural-makers include Beau Stanton, who grew up in Laguna and graduated from Laguna College of Art + Design (LCAD). While wait-listed for grad school in New York, he ended up assistant to culture-jamming pioneer Ron English, whose works include the unmistakable Marlboro-red packaging sporting only the word *breathe*. Stanton's mural is exquisitely detailed in house and spray paint. Lady Liberty's face emerges from a sea of decorative swirls, a tall ship balanced on her head. The nautical work wraps around the Laguna Beer Co. tasting room in the "Hive Center," two mirrored strips of businesses including LCAD Gallery 805 and eateries.

James Thistlewaite, another LCAD grad, has been in residence for months. His meticulous vertical image can be found behind the Hive. Created in a photorealist style with only General's Charcoal Pencils—which, he says, broke all the time—Thistlewaite's mural is the largest hand-drawn art piece in the country.

"What's wonderful about being here so long," Thistlewaite says, "is I get to meet all the artists ... and work out what they've loved about the experience. This is my first mural." What? "I'm the runt of this amazing show of artists," he confirms.

It may be his first solo, but Thistlewaite assisted on the notorious *Charming*, the first street-art mural in Laguna, according to the curators. The young artist was earning some cash as a barista before starting LCAD when he met Ben Eine, who had moved to Laguna after marrying an American. "Ben was one of the pioneers of graffiti in the U.K.," says Rubin. "He was the master printer for Banksy, was instrumental in showing Banksy how to do his stencil work." The two Bens ran Elephants and Castles together.

Charming was inadvertently painted over when the building's ownership changed. By the time the situation was rectified, Eine's visa had been revoked because of his graffiti convictions. "The flip side of all this was," Rubin says, savoring the irony, "when all that was going on, David Cameron, the British prime minister, was presenting the Obamas with a Ben Eine painting as a state gift."

Near Thistlewaite's piece, *Bear Named Pa'u* by Chad Hasegawa doesn't come into focus at first glance, but the black and gray attacks of paint in wide-brushed application soon coalesce into a head-and-shoulders portrait of a bear. The eyes of an Asian woman in red still stared through construction equipment parked in front of San Clemente-based Brett Crawford's contribution last week at First Thursdays art walk, as they did when I went at midday.

Few people were looking at murals at the art walk. Maybe a map or mural tracker is needed? Hopefully, hours after I left, the rowdy crowd imbibing at Laguna Beer Co. had spread out over the district, stumbling from mural to mural.

Next up are San Francisco's Casey O'Connell's piece and a collaboration called *The Shrine* by Kelly Castillo and Sara Haase. I don't know the exact locations, but I'm looking forward to the search, ale in hand.

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